

THE
BEGGAR GIRL
AND
Her Benefactors.



BRITISH MUSEUM

1801

THE
BEGGAR GIRL
AND
Her Benefactors.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

BY MRS. BENNETT,

*AUTHOR OF WELCH HEIRESS, YUVENILE INDISCRETIONS, AGNES DE-COURGL,
AND ELLEN COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWELL.*

A poem, a drama, a novel, which represents virtue in lively colours, models the reader on the virtuous characters, who act without his perceiving it ; they become interesting, and the author inculcates morality without seeming to mention it.

LE MERCIER.

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THE BEGAR GARDEN

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BY JOHN BROWNE

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR



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1800
LONDON
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THE

BEGGAR GIRL.

CHAP. I.

A French Milliner, and a libel on the fashionable ladies of Utopia.

MADAME LA CROIX lived in a fashionable street, at the polite end of the town, where her house, furniture and apartments were all, like herself, extremely handsome.— She received our heroine with the ease of an old acquaintance, and treated her with the politeness of a new one. She was indeed so

much every thing to every body, that Rosa was ready to say with her patroness, " Madame La Croix is the best creature in the world."

Madame's stock in trade was disposed with great taste in a few glass cases, and the ladies who honoured her with their custom, lounged, with their friends, about every room in her elegant house. She kept a few smart work women, who however were seldom called on to assist in the sale of the tasty frippery they were employed to make, for Madame always waited on her customers herself.

The furniture, ornaments, and taste of the house, corresponded more with the beauty of the owner, than with the conveniences of her business; a certain air of something too exquisite for description, run through the whole, and indeed gave it more the appearance of a temple of luxury, than conveniences for trade.

Rosa had an opportunity of observing on the first day, that Madame's connections were of the highest rank. The carriages that stopped at her door were emblazoned with coronets,

coronets, and so judicious were the attentions of the handsome milliner, that she often contrived to wait on the ladies and their friends in different apartments ; a delicacy the more to be prized, as she had also the honour to supply men of fashion with Brussels point-lace, and other articles, for which indeed she had a great demand. Rosa, though charmed with Madame, amused by the variety of the well-fancied habiliments made in her house, and elated with hope of being soon settled in some or other of the high connections she daily saw, waited with great anxiety the arrival in town of Lady Gauntlet, and this impatience was not lessened, by finding herself an object of curious examination to some of Madame La Croix's customers, and many of her friends, to whom with the highest apparent good humour she introduced her.

Madame La Croix, though a native of Paris, spoke English fluently ; she was notwithstanding very much pleased to find Rosa could converse with her in French ; and one gentleman, rather past the meridian of life, who, whether friend or customer of the fair

milliner, made it in his way to call several times in the course of the day, and always walk, without being announced, into the sitting parlour, gravely assured her she was a perfect paragon.

The second day of Rosa's residence in —— street, she sent, under Madame's directions, a couple of chairman into the city for her trunks, and received a note with them from the book-keeper, informing her he had a letter left with him, which he had engaged not to deliver but into her own hands; and requested to know when and where he might see her.

Rosa blushed;—one image always presented itself to her mind, on occasions like this, where imagination was left at large;—a letter! who but Montreville would write to her with such extreme caution; yes, it must be Montreville,—and her colour encreased.

Madame had the eye of a lynx; “ You are always very charming, my little friend,” said she, “ but that billet, ah what a lovely effect it has.”

Rosa blushed more deep.

“ Oh Mademoiselle,” continued Madame, “ you are a little rogue, I see that ; there is a happy man in the world.”

Rosa was now alarmed ; Madame would perhaps be questioned by her patroness, and should she suspect her of carrying on a private correspondence with a lover—heavens ! how dreadful ! such an idea must lower her in the estimation of a being so pure and prudent as Lady Gauntlet; nay, it was a suspicion she could not bear in the “ best creature in the world ;” she hesitated an answer, part an excuse for her confusion, and part denying the accusation.

Madame laughed it off as a joke, but believed it in down right earnest, and whispered it in confidence to the gentleman who honoured her with his frequent calls.

By the third day this gentleman was become part of the family, and Madame’s kindness to Rosa increased with his visits.

Saturday a handsome coach waited to take Madame and her spouse, for Madame had a spouse, though he was seldom seen or spoken

of in the family, to their country villa, and Rosa was invited to be of their party.

As this was the first word she had heard of coach or villa, she was not prepared for the invitation. Lady Gauntlet was every hour expected in town; and as she employed herself in new modelling her old clothes, she hesitated about accepting it; but Madame would not be refused, and she must go in Madame's coach to Madame's villa.

The usage of other traders who keep houses in the country, was reversed in Madame's establishments: the house where her trade was carried on, could vie in luxury and ornament with many of her quality customers.

Large mirrors, indulgent sofas, down cushions, curtains of the finest chintz, lined with rose-colour Persian,—and indeed all the furniture of the first taste and expence, decorated the apartments at her house in —— street.

At the villa every thing was plain, convenient, and useful—but no more. “ I must,” said

said Madame, “ have air,—I must relax at least one day in the week.”

Rosa thought it very reasonable.

“ And I must have a coach to carry me backwards and forwards, and to air when I am in the country.”

Rosa was happy she could command such conveniences; and so, reconciled to the villa and the coach, they would have sat down to chess, had not the constant visitor arrived and interrupted them.

The third day returned Madame, her spouse, and Rosa to town,—the constant visitor having left them the second day. During the ride Madame professed more kindness than ever for Rosa, and for the first time expressed a curiosity to know the nature of her dependence on the Countess of Gauntlet.

Rosa, with her usual frankness, confessed the very slight claims she had on the protection on which all her hopes depended, and was proceeding with a warm eulogy on the beautiful Countess, when Madame surprized her with a proposal, which could have no motive, she said, but the avowed one, of retain-

ing an agreeable companion ; this was for her to remain in —— street, as her assistant, provided, however, Lady Gauntlet approved it.

Rosa had an inherent, and even to herself, on some occasions, an unaccountable pride about her : she was conscious that she had no resource but in her own industry and talents, and felt the strongest desire to exert them ; but there was something in trade, in buying and selling to advantage, very retrograde to her feelings ; and though Madame's business was certainly transacted with great ease, and as it appeared, no less profit, she could not prevail on herself to accede to the proposal. Madame was evidently piqued, but had possibly her own reasons for dropping the subject, which she did without abating in attention to Rosa.

On their arrival in —— street, she found, to her infinite joy, a card from Lady Gauntlet, appointing her to breakfast in Pall-Mall, the next morning.

After the first emotion of joy, Rosa felt an unaccountable weight at her heart ; she was alternately elated by hope and depressed by fear ;

fear ; her all was at stake ; her destiny seemed to hang on the next morning. She selected the best of the clothes she had been assisted to modernize by Madame La Croix's work-women, laid them in readiness, took up a book, tried to read, to work, to draw, to write ; all would not do ; fear, or some other pre-sentiment, predominated over hope.— She recollected her friend John Brown : a week had near elapsed, and neither his presence, nor any tidings from him, confirmed the assurance of his parting looks. She wept for the first time under Madame La Croix's roof, and declined going down to supper with that lady and her constant visitor.

The next morning, having dressed with that taste and neatness which always distinguished her, she ordered a chair, and was carried to Pall-Mall before Madame La Croix was stirring.

Lady Gauntlet was an extraordinary instance of what women should be, and as extraordinary an instance of what they should not be : formed to attract, to engage, to enslave all eyes by her beauty, she had a mind

well stored with all the fascinating *agrémens* that give soul to beauty, and render the hour of "sweet converse" more enchanting than the most luxurious tenderness; such was Lady Gauntlet to man: to woman, she was all smiles, all sweetness, all politeness, condescension and apparent innocent frankness; she could

— "look like the innocent flower,

" But be the serpent under it."

She seemed rather to be solicited to share, than to lead dissipation; and was such an economist of time, or rather such a Machiavel in the distribution of it, that however late she retired to rest, she was at the hour of nine in her dressing room in the morning.

She received our heroine with one of those endearing smiles, which has cost many a wife her peace, and many an husband his honour; and placing her by her side, enquired how she had passed her time with Mrs. La Croix.

Rosa was charmed with the kindness of her reception, and looked up to the Countess as a being of superior, if not a celestial order;

overcome

overcome by grateful sensibility and respect, it was some moments before she could utter a syllable; and when a little recovered, she raised her eyes; they glanced on a picture that struck her speechless; nor was this surprising,—it was Montreville: his eyes, his commanding brow, his oval fine formed face, his handsome mouth,—nay it was—no, it was not himself—not so young—so full of health, of animation;—nor was the character of the face so expressive of candour and benevolence, but the likeness so true, that Rosa was near fainting.

Lady Gauntlet was all attention; she rung for her woman; water and drops were brought.

Rosa revived; she ventured a second glance at the picture, thought it less like, and after a third, could both apologize for her behaviour and thank her charming protectress.

As Rosa was as beautiful as her ladyship, and as she had in her mind and manner all which that lady so well affected, nature designed them congenial spirits; and it was as natural for the Countess to be pleased with a real dis-

play of the graces she assumed, as it was for Rosa to look up with a sort of humble admiration to a woman of such high rank, so lovely, and so eminently accomplished, who at the same time possessed such feeling and sensibility.

Lady Gauntlet was gazing with silent wonder on a young creature so much an object for temptation, and yet so fortified to resist it, and Rosa kissing her hand with the most respectful order, when a lady entered, unannounced, and flew to embrace the Countess.

Lady Gauntlet directed a glance at Rosa, which had a particular meaning, as she presented her; and the stranger, after examining her like a critic in the human face divine, exclaimed, "She is very handsome! pray who is she?"

Lady Gauntlet was never at "a fault,"— "She is," said she, "a young person whom I am anxious to place in some very regular family, as companion or governess. She is very accomplished, sings charmingly, dances well, writes quick and free, well born and better educated."

"And

And how, asks our fastidious reader, could Lady Gauntlet possibly tell how charmingly Rosa sung, how finely she danced, or how freely she wrote? did the vain thing introduce these mighty matters into the history of her misfortunes?

No.

Then why did Lady Gauntlet assert what she did not know?

It was the habit to which her ladyship accustomed herself, when she had a point to carry, in which case her melodious voice, smooth periods and courtly phrases, were never shackled, by a strict regard to truth.

Mrs. Woudbe, the lady who ran to her ladyship's embrace, was one of that description of people, who are ycleped quality binding. Mrs. Woudbe had undoubtedly a father and mother, at some period or other of her existence, but having the good fortune to attract the regard of a very rich man, she became his wife, and the rage of the bucks of the day, without any body troubling themselves to trace her family or education, which truth to say, would have cost some labour.

Mr,

Mr. Woudbe, the lucky son of a more lucky father, who had the common good fortune to drive his own set of bright bays, while the unthinking prodigal, to whom he was steward, saw his paternal acres go to the hammer, was rich enough to please his fancy in a wife ; that wife so pleased half the town, that, like Lord Gauntlet, the first characters took him by the hand. Proud of the honour conferred on him by nobles of the land, he suffered his pretty wife to entertain, and be entertained like a princess, at the same time protesting to his friends, and declaring to herself, that if once he had reason to suppose her capable of injuring him in the tender point, he would turn her out of doors without a shift ; and very happy it was for the pretty wife, that detection did not follow offence, otherwise not even the gods can tell how often poor Mrs. Woudbe would have been turned out shiftless.

While the bud of beauty bloomed, nay even while the rose was full blown, the nobles continued to visit the lady, and take the husband by the hand ; during which period, whatever

whatever excess or caprice distinguished the first belles of the age, was sure to be imitated by Mrs. Woudbe ; she had her fêtes, her public breakfasts, her private plays, her concerts, her archery, her conversations, and there was a time when she was one of the best bats in the county ; but, as she might have learned, even from an old almanack, " all things change ;" and as the men were no longer to be tempted to get agues at her country seat, or surfeits at her town residence, the ladies dropped off of course.

Ladies !!!

If a novel writer must be taxed for truth and probability every third line, what is to become of the avocation, or profession, or confession, or what the world pleases ? The reader is warned, that the author will plead her privilege, and in future annihilate time, space, and circumstance, whenever her story requires it ; but this once she assures them, that in a certain country called Utopia, ladies of the first distinction, and who have even never been *found out* themselves, will make one at the most ridiculous puppet-shew, given by women

women with whom they never associate, whose whole lives are past in a continued scene of abandoned depravity, and who literally rob the miserable prostitute of her hire; but the grand secret, that is the Utopian secret, is, *the men are there.*

Mrs. Woudbe was now becoming a very miserable woman: she had a tall daughter, and no adorers; she made her parties, and invited her friends as usual, but every soul was engaged: she married her daughter—still no body came. The poor woman was reduced to despair—when Lady Gauntlet took pity on her, and carried a chere amie, of high rank, five days out of every seven, to dine with Mrs. Woudbe. This was a very costly consolation, and bore so hard on Mr. Woudbe's allowance for housekeeping, that he insisted on passing four of the winter months at his seat in the country.

The country! how can a woman, whose life has passed in losing one lover and gaining another; who hates reading, and dare not think; who, pining for the never-to-be-recalled past, cannot enjoy the present; who, weary

weary of living, fears to die; how can such a woman exist in the country!

But the evil was irremediable: she opened her sad heart to her friend, Lady Gauntlet—her ladyship at once saw into Woudbe's motive—she was affected—the house was really convenient—Woudbe's dinners were good, his wine excellent, and his wife accommodating—so that her regret was sincere: she felt acutely for *herself*, but could not take the trouble to advise her distressed friend, nor, till the instant when she entered her dressing-room, bestowed a thought on her exquisite misery.

Lord Denningcourt had once, as Mrs. Feversham said, “a character.” So young, so handsome, and so generous as he was at his *entrée* into life, it was not in the nature of things for him to be less than a favourite in the first circles; but as Lady Gauntlet and her friend Mrs. Woudbe, were rather too far advanced in life to be his lordship's taste, he had, and perhaps he was the only man who could resist the fascination of the one lady, and totally overlook the other. The Countess

cess had the world at her feet; but as one stubborn being rebelled against her sovereign power, he was of more importance than all the rest; and though few ladies die of passion for a *lounger*, he was the magnet that induced her to oblige her little lord with her company at Mushroom Place; for, though she was in the secret of his family arrangements, nothing short of her own gratification would have carried her thither.

To insinuate that Lord Denningcourt was ignorant of the Countess's partiality, would be to suppose him ignorant also of the manners of the age, or extremely stupid: he was neither;—but though he had been a man of intrigue, all his amours had more than mere custom and ton to recommend them; and he had a strong propensity to believe the best side of every body's character, and to pity the worst. He did not, of course, think Lady Gauntlet a Lucrece; but self-flattery, of which he had a competent share, persuaded him, an attachment so persevering (it had now lasted three or four years, that is, whenever they happened to meet)

meet) must be an uncommon one; and tho' he had not the least inclination to abate of his indifference, he could not help treating her with particular respect.

Lady Gauntlet saw, through that apathy which was becoming habitual, a concern for the young person, whose note to him involved her in such difficulties; and she also saw a disgust he could ill conceal, increasing every moment against his intended wife; she took advantage of the moment, and made herself the confidant of his feeling in both points.

He admired Rosa: he spoke of her embarrassment with compassion; and with regret of her unprotected situation;—he shrank from the narrow mind his intended and almost affianced wife betrayed, and declared, while she fed the jealousy of her fantastical sister, and betrayed her own envy, by reviling a lovely, unoffending girl, she looked like an absolute fury.

“ You admire this charming young woman, Lord Denningcourt,” said Lady Gauntlet, with infinite softness in her eyes and manner.

“ Not

"Not as a woman, Lady Gauntlet," replied his lordship, "but as an unprotected, nay, do you not see she is a persecuted, young creature."

"Shall I protect her, Lord Denningcourt?"

His lordship looked surprised.

"Will it oblige you?"

He kissed her fair hand. "It will—honour yourself, dear Countess."

"Will it oblige you?"

He kissed both fair hands, and the lady took the first opportunity to steal from the company in search of the distressed damsel, whom she was anxious to protect, not only for, but from Lord Denningcourt; and an opportunity already half offered.

Poor Mrs. Woudbe, in ransacking her invention for expedients to kill time in the country, hit on one, which required all Lady Gauntlet's command of countenance to hear without laughing outright.

Mrs. Woudbe had been the first at almost every thing; but still there was a point of notoriety, which her residence in the country only could attain—she would write a book.

"A

“A book, child!” exclaimed Lady Gauntlet—“what, would you write the—” Harlot’s Progress was on her lips, but she checked the impulse of satire, which would so well deserve a retort.

“Yes, a book! As to your Burneys, and Smiths, and Moores, and Pratts, and such odd quizzes, one might make as good stories from what one sees in ones own family, or your ladyship’s—and indeed every family I know; but as to castles, and chains, and moats, and lovers, these now are the things that pleases me; and I am sure, I could out-horror the wax figure all to nothing, if I could but write a little faster, and spell a little better.”

“Keep an amanuensis,” said Lady Gauntlet.”

This conversation, which passed the last time the fair friends met, recurred to Lady Gauntlet’s recollection in the moment of Mrs. Woudbe’s entrance—“Yes,” said she, internally, “she shall write, and my protégé shall be her amanuensis.” Her ladyship requested Rosa to walk into the next room, to look at some drawings of her daughter’s, and

and then, after hearing a catalogue of distresses from poor Mrs Woudbe, mentioned her young friend and the book.

Mrs. Woudbe said she was a very lovely girl; and instead of writing books for her, which indeed she was afraid would wear out her patience, might amuse her, answer letters, fill up cards; and, above all, being so pretty, and, as her ladyship said, so accomplished, her attraction might help to fill her deserted rooms, and once more bring her parties into fashion.

All this, and more, Lady Gauntlet was sure would happen.

“ But will she go into the horrid country with me?” asked Mrs. Woudbe, in a desponding accent.

That too Lady Gauntlet pledged herself for; and Mrs. Woudbe rejoiced at such an acquisition—was impatient to fix every thing—terms she left to her friend, for the morrow was her doomsday; to-morrow she left London, without a party, for four long months, and it was now the middle of October.

Lady Gauntlet went herself to fetch Rosa; and having hurried over the character of Mrs.

Woudbe, as a good sort of an ignorant woman, abounding in riches, announced the situation she had procured for her, with a salary of fifty guineas. The only draw-back on the eligibility of the situation, she confessed, was an obligation to go directly to one of the finest seats in England, where an extensive and well-chosen library of books, music, drawing, and such domestic amusements, were all the resources from ennui.

“All!” repeated Rosa, with energy, and colouring from excess of grateful pleasure.

“Then you can live happily in the country?” said Lady Gauntlet, embracing her, and affecting to attribute the real pleasure she felt at the early and unexpected completion of her own secret wish, to joy at the establishment of her little friend, as she now gaily called her. “But before I present you in your new character,” said she, “I must speak of Lord Denningcourt. You blush—does his name then excite so much pleasure, or is it painful to speak of him?”

“Neither, my amiable patroness,” answered Rosa, with an air of ingenuity that confirmed her

her words. “ If I blush, it is because I feel I have been so ungrateful as not to think of one to whom I owe so much happiness;—it is Lord Denningcourt I must thank for Lady Gauntlet’s goodness; but believe me, you can speak on no subject that will give me pain.”

Lady Gauntlet seldom felt a rising blush; when the extraordinary circumstance did happen, the mask of rouge happily concealed it; at this moment she was conscious of the weakness, and turned away her head; but, after a pause, “ Well,” she resumed, “ I believe every word you say; and you must believe I—I can have no—that is, I have only your interest and honour at heart, when I hint it is by no means necessary for Lord Denningcourt to know exactly where you are.”

“ Certainly not,” replied Rosa, with a cheerful and ready acquiescence which was very acceptable to the Countess; and Mrs. Faversham’s hints at that moment recurring to her recollection, so accordant with the reserve recommended by her ladyship, she repeated, “ No—certainly not.”

“ You

" You are a charming and a good girl," said the countess—" I wish my daughters were as complying."

" Your daughters!" repeated Rosa--tears starting into her eyes—" ah! how happy are they in such a mother! Envious blessing! a mother, whose virtues and whose example, pure spirits must exult to emulate."

Lady Gauntlet again turned her face another way, and hastily passing to the dressing-room, presented Rosa to her friend as her now settled companion.

Mrs. Woudbe saluted her very graciously; asked if she could bear the odious country—stared at hearing it was her choice—could not [think how it were possible; but her almost incredulous wonder had in it a certain degree of comfort;—with a companion so cheerful, *all* her hours could not be quite deplorable: she longed to begin the experiment, and even proposed carrying her home in the carriage to dine with Mr. Woudbe.

Lady Gauntlet saw no objection to the obliging offer, as her things might be sent after her.

Rosa modestly suggested the propriety of taking leave of a person from whom she had received great civilities.

Lady Gauntlet would take all the return necessary for those civilities on herself; but perceiving, by Rosa's intelligent countenance, that she really had a desire to return to Madame La Croix, her ladyship, whose long-practised, coinciding sweetness was grown too much into nature to suffer her to oppose the wishes of any being with whom she was connected, by *direct means*, begged she would act in that and every other respect, as was most agreeable to herself; for such was her confidence in the right turn of her mind, her approbation would even anticipate every step she would chuse to take. How painfully flattering to the grateful Rosa was this goodness, and how certain to carry every point the politic countess projected.

Mrs. Woudbe, who had a thousand horrid regulations to make previous to her banishment, took her leave, and left her future companion to vent the thankful effusions of her heart at the feet of her noble protectress.

All

All that was kind, condescending, and affectionate, was Lady Gauntlet; all that was respectfully enthusiastic and grateful, was her protégée. Again the former reminded the latter of the prudence, not to say necessity, of concealing from Lord Denningcourt her residence and situation; and to render her secret more secure, she recommended it to her not to inform La Croix where or with whom she was going to rusticate; for though La Croix was certainly the best creature in the world, she was not infallible; but neither she nor any other person could tell what they did not know—ergo, neither Madame La Croix nor any other person was to be trusted with the arrangements of that morning.

Thus flattered, caressed, and protected, sitting on a French sofa, in an elegant, highly ornamented dressing-room, the perfumes of Arabia breathing round from China vases, filled with blooming sweets, by the side of a woman whose beauty and affability were as superior as her rank, how could Rosa, surrounded by the spells of fascination, resist or suspect the enchantress; or how, in pledging

her sacred word and honour, to keep her situation a profound secret, in such a moment, and such company, recollect her prior engagement with poor John Brown, “ to acquaint him with every step she took.”

Rosa’s heart was as pure and as naturally perfect as her person was lovely ; but, as that able delineator of the human mind, Lady Gauntlet, said of Madame La Croix, she was not infallible—she at this instant forgot John Brown, and every promise made to him.

The countess now having ordered her toilette, sent her own chair with Rosa :— Madame La Croix welcomed her with as much warmth as if her absence had robbed her of a dear indulgence ; and her countenance fell, when she understood a few hours longer only would terminate her residence in — street ; but as she protested no person in the world could more truly respect and love the charming Countess of Gauntlet than her humble self, so no being could more implicitly believe all she did was right ; yet it was impossible to know the lovely Miss Walsingham,

singham, and not regret the being deprived of her society; for her part, she had never felt so disposed to love any person on so short an acquaintance; and there was a certain person in the world, a man of high rank and fortune, who would be in despair.

In that instant, while Rosa was wondering whether Madame alluded to Lord Lowder or Lord Denningcourt, and how she became acquainted with the designs of either, to her utter confusion and dismay, a high-varnished carriage drew up to the door; and she saw Sir Jacob Lydear hand out the beautiful Lady Lowder.

Madame La Croix instantly left the parlour, to attend the lady and her escorte, in too much haste to observe the change in Rosa's countenance.

It was now she regretted the not accepting Mrs. Woudbe's offer, and now she also recollected her motives for declining it; and much as she desired to quit a house hitherto so unexceptionable in her idea, yet to quit it, and not see honest John—not explain to him her situation—not settle a mode of corre-

pondence—not give him credentials to Scotland;—how, oh ! how could she answer it to her heart, and to her honour, to do that.

Lady Gauntlet's injunctions, to observe a total silence in respect to where she was going, to Madame La Croix, were not the less binding for the sweet and gentle manner in which they were enforced; *she* could have no interest in the arrangement—none in the concealment; *she* was influenced by the principles of benevolence to assist the friendless, and by those of virtue to protect the innocent; and however interesting to all Rosa's former and present feelings the preserving an intercourse with John, yet such was her respect to the opinion of her patroness, such her idea of the sublimity of her virtue, and such her own real apprehension of insult, if again reduced to the friendless and forlorn situation from which she had been so unexpectedly delivered, that she determined to make Lady Gauntlet the confidante of the distressful dilemma she was in respecting her old friend, and submit to her superior wisdom, and that innate tenderness of nature, for which
she

she gave her full credit, the future means of corresponding with him.

While thus recurring to her own immediate situation, she almost forgot the persons who, to her astonishment, were now under the same roof with herself.

She was so entirely a stranger to the less culpable side of Sir Jacob Lydear's character, that she could not even give him credit for the service he had rendered her, in removing her from Mushroom Place;—the recollection of his conduct in Yorkshire rendered her suspicious of the motives for an act by which she was benefitted; and there was nothing she more dreaded than being seen by him. Once she had a transient suspicion that he was the person of rank and fortune Madame La Croix alluded to; but if he had come to the house on such an errand, would Lady Lowder have been his companion? An interview with her old school-companion was indeed little less desired, though not so much feared, as with Sir Jacob.

While thus, with her eyes fixed through the window-blind on Lady Lowder's coach,

she ruminated on her situation, she saw it draw off, to make way for another carriage not less shewy, though the pannels were only ornamented with an humble W. out of which stepped Mrs. Woudbe.

A flush of joy overspread Rosa's cheeks, and she was on the point of flying to her, but Lady Gauntlet's injunction arrested her steps.

To claim Mrs. Woudbe's protection, would be to acquaint not only Madame La Croix, but the Mushrooms, the Lowders, and every body from whom she wished to be concealed, with her situation, and expose the generous Countess to the ill offices of those people so unworthy to be called her friends.

Lady Lowder, like Mrs. Woudbe, were probably both Madame's customers;—accident had certainly brought the latter thither, as she was ignorant of her being an intimate in the house, and why not the former? as to Sir Jacob's being in London, and in the train of his mother's visitor, it was, though unexpected, a very natural circumstance. In the hope, therefore, she might entirely escape observation,

observation, she ascended, by a back pair of stairs, to the room where she had slept; and, after packing what clothes she had out of her trunk, saw, within half an hour, from the window, Lady Lowder step, alone, into her carriage—that of Mrs. Woudbe not being in waiting.

An universal trepidation seized her;—her new patroness gone!—Lady Lowder gone! and Sir Jacob remaining! spite of the good impression Madame's kindness had made on her mind, she trembled with apprehension. Yes, it must be Sir Jacob she meant; he was her man of rank and fashion—he had made but too successful inquiries after her;—what now should she do—how make her escape?

In that moment a tall, handsome man, in a blue undress frock, a large cocked uniform hat and fierce cockade, ran gaily up the steps of Madame's house, smartly rapped at the door, was let in; and lo, at the same time, the formidable Baronet was let out.

Rosa again respired with freedom: she reproached herself for the half-formed suspicion of Madame; and having finished

packing her trunks, was descending with alacrity to the parlour, when, one of the shewing-rooms being opened by the gentleman who just entered, she saw Mrs. Woudbe advance, and heard her say, in a reproachful tone, " You are three quarters of an hour beyond your appointment." The closing the door prevented her seeing or hearing more; and she reached the parlour without a single comment on an incident which she was too innocent and too ignorant to suspect, was any thing extraordinary.

She was, however, surprised to find Madame with her writing-stand open before her:—this, however, she soon reconciled to probability; for, as Madame had certainly quite as much pride as any French milliner need to have, and as she had never spoken either of an acquaintance or customers who were not titled, Mrs. Woudbe's rank, Rosa supposed, might be consigned to some of the work-women.

In a few minutes Mrs. Woudbe's carriage returned; and, after it had waited a short time, the Lady descended the stairs,

was

was met in the hall, and attended to her carriage by Madame.

What became of the gentleman who outstaid his appointment, was no part of Rosa's inquiry; she was now wholly taken up in making peace with her own heart—atoning, by every possible attention to Madame, for the injustice she had secretly done her; and Madame, on her part, was fully occupied, by endeavours to draw from the unsuspecting Rosa the place where she might have the happiness to see her;—but had she been sifting the most practised, instead of the most artless of women, her attempts could not have been more completely defeated; for Rosa, after confessing she was under an obligation of honour not to reveal her destination, referred her to the Countess of Gauntlet, whom she doubted not would permit the friendly intercourse she was so politely anxious to obtain.

Madame was silenced at once: she knew Lady Gauntlet must have been impelled, by very strong motives indeed, to take so beautiful a creature as Rosa under her protection;

she suspected that the charms of the young stranger had somehow, or somewhere, attracted certain regards inimical to the Countess's dearest interest, and the intention to conceal her from the world justified those suspicions.

Madame had herself formed some plans, which the removal of Rosa must subvert; but she dared not attempt to counteract the will and pleasure of the divine Countess.

"Well, then, my charming friend," cried Madame, "should any event restore you to the liberty of thinking for *yourself*, you will not forget me."

Rosa coloured: she wished to explain that she was the most obliged creature to Lady Gauntlet, and the most happy, in submitting every thing to her, in the world; but Madame's dinner was announced, and she regretted deeply her constant friend was out of town.

In the evening Lady Gauntlet called to take Rosa from —— street in her carriage. Madame was so humble, so servile, and so officious about the Countess, and, in her presence, so unmindful of every thing else, that

that Rosa was spared any pain in the separation; and, when seated at the back of the vis-a-vis, her retrospect of the five minutes did not raise Madame in her estimation.

The Countess was thoughtful; and Rosa did not presume to break a silence, no less new than awful, while the carriage, like all other coronetted carriages, flew over the pavement, till it stopped in Portman-Square.

Mrs. Woudbe received her with rapture; her eyes were red with weeping, but she made fully up for Lady Gauntlet's silence; her tongue ran incessantly; and had it been possible to annihilate time and space, no woman would have been happier; for Mr. Woudbe had promised that, on her consenting to stay in the country four months instead of three, she should, on her return to town, give a masquerade, and invite every body, which was the most delightful thing in the world, for, under a mask, every body would be sure to come.

Lady Gauntlet's want of spirits was accounted for on the entrance of Mr. Woudbe, who *delicately* assured her, he was credibly informed,

informed, by some of her enemies, Lord Gauntlet was in danger of losing both his title and estate. Her ladyship arose with dignity, embraced both Rosa and her friend, without seeming to have heard Mr. Woudbe, and permitted him to lead her to her carriage.

Rosa burst into tears. What! had such a woman enemies! ah! well then might so wretched a being as herself be oppressed and persecuted—well might the dear and charming woman appear out of spirits—her heart must beat in unison with her lord,—with the father of her children;—her interest, her honour was his;—his deprivations must affect—his griefs overwhelm—ah! why was she not permitted to use her humble efforts to console, to attend, to watch by her?

“ Oh, for heaven’s sake!” cried Mrs. Woudbe, “ don’t be in the dismal—I am all over nerve, and expected you would amuse me.”

Rosa recollected the duties of her situation; and apologised for the natural emotions of grief at parting with her invaluable friend.

Mr.

Mr. Woudbe joined them, and was so highly pleased with the addition his wife had made to the family, that the evening went off with so much satisfaction on his part, ease on that of his wife, and content on that of Rosa, it was not till shewn to an handsome bed-chamber that she lamented Lady Gauntlet's domestic troubles on her own account. The cloud which hung on her ladyship's brow prevented the intended confidence respecting poor John; and as the hour for their departure from town was fixed at ten, she had no alternative but writing.

If any thing could excuse Mrs. Woudbe's aversion to the retirement her husband thought necessary, it was his country seat and manner of living in it. The house was large without being convenient, splendid without comfort, gaudy without elegance; its front was in the middle of a large dirty village, and the grounds behind, so loaded with old timber and young plantations, as to obstruct every possible view of the adjacent country.

Instead of a large well chosen library, the apartment, originally designed for that purpose,

pose, had been converted into a theatre, a St. Cecilia's hall, and a dancing room.

Mr. Woudbe read books of agriculture, and treatises on farriery, in a room erected in the garden; where, as he had good reasons for not entrusting his affairs to a steward, he kept his own accounts, and transacted the justice business of the village.

When Mrs. Woudbe did read at all, her studies were the thumb'd volumes of a little circulating library at the next market town; the only books her mansion contained were a family bible, some old school-books of her daughter, and a few novels published by subscription, where she had the pleasure to see her own name in the printed alphabetical list, among the W.'s of quality.

A few glaring roses, painted by her half-educated daughter, and stuck over her dressing-room chimney, were all the traits of drawing about Mrs. Woudbe, and she did not understand a note of music.—So much for the elegant amusements of the country seat of Mr. Woudbe.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woudbe could neither bear solitude, nor be amused by the company she could command: Rosa, the charming companion chance so unexpectedly threw in her way, soon shared the fate of the rest of her favorites; for Rosa was totally a stranger to all the scenes of delightful dissipation which furnished topics to amuse her. She had neither read nor seen, and could not talk, on subjects to entertain her patroness, who often, very often, preferred the company of her ignorant loquacious woman, to that of her elegant companion.

After fatiguing herself and Rosa two days, by running over the house and grounds, rather to abuse than shew them, the poor woman first became gloomy, then peevish, and at last rude. Nothing, either Rosa or any other person did, pleased her, and the worst part of her ill humour fell, according to the old charter, on her humble companion.

If Rosa was cheerful—it was well for *her*,—she had no trouble, no care, nothing to sigh after: if, sinking under the poignancy of retrospection, her down-cast eyes traced, without

out marking, the flowers on the carpet, she was the dullest creature in the universe,—enough to give the horrors, instead of curing them; and if, neither gay nor grave, she happened to hit the happy medium,—oh how conceitedly insipid!

Rosa felt the slavery she was in, but saw no prospect of emancipation that might not lead from bad to worse, except Lady Gauntlet, when she could dare to acquaint her with her sufferings, should be pleased to recommend her to some other situation; and the answer she received from her ladyship, in respect to her friend John, had encreased her respect; and gratitude for her patroness, without encouraging her to hope any future letters, except in answer to those she might please to write, would be acceptable.

Her ladyship, in the most obliging terms, commended her attachment to an old friend; promised if he came to La Croix, where he had not yet been, she would herself give him an address to Mr. Woudbe's, having ordered him to be sent to her for that purpose; said

she was going to Bath, &c. but gave no address there.

This letter then, amid many other daily mortifications, was a new source of grief and perplexity: either some accident had happened to poor John, or he was deceived in the means by which he meant to acquaint himself with her residence; in either case, she had no possible means of serving him, and felt every hour more keenly than the last, a misfortune which deprived her of a sincere and honest, though humble friend, at a period, when the more she saw of his superiors, the more she valued and regretted him.

Sad and solitary were most of the hours she past under Mrs. Woudbe's protection: the husband was vulgar and purse proud; the wife peevish, ignorant, and often rude; they had no virtues, and having no resources within themselves, could not be tolerable company to a third person.

There was belonging to this house, which Mr. Woudbe bought a great bargain, a chapel, kept for shew, not devotion; and an old out-of-tune organ, left in it by the former

owner

owner, still remained ; thither our poor beggar went, when the cold was not too intense, to play, to weep and to ruminate on the incidents of her life ; and thither too did the image of him, whom no change of circumstance had power entirely to banish from her heart, pursue her.

There she wept over the happy scenes of childhood at Mount - pleasant ;—there she mourned for the good Major,—and there she had full leisure to recollect and regret the fate of his beautiful Kattie, and her less pitiable mother ;—there indeed, all her early friends, as well as late attachments, rose in array before her hopeless fancy ;—had Lady Gauntlet condescended to encourage her to write, dear Mrs. Harley was at Bath, and some happy chance might have discovered her address ;—had she been blessed with acquaintance or family connections, through some or other of them she might have found means of discovering the dear and beloved Mrs. Walsingham. “ And, oh ! ” cried she passionately, “ why, why must my Elinor, the dear, dear companion of my youthful happiness ! why must she be lost to the poor friendless Rosa.”

A dreary winter, past thus in unavailing regret, and hopeless despondence, could not act as a cosmetic on the complexion; a green and yellow melancholy began to invade the lilly of Rosa's face and neck; her appetite failed, and she was fast sinking into despair, when a sudden change in Mrs. Woudbe, by interesting her feeling for another, diverted her mind from brooding over its own corrosive prospects.

Mrs. Woudbe became at once all affection, harmony and good nature; she could not exist a moment without dear Wally, as she chose to call our heroine; dear, dear creature! what was life without her! her sense, her taste, her opinion were infallible,—nobody living or dead was ever like her!

Rosa, naturally grateful and affectionate, greeted the change with a mixture of pleasure and pity; it was certainly more desirable to be an object of regard, than reproach, even if that regard was more the result of caprice, than judgment; and she could not but compassionate a mind so weakly subject to every new start of passion.

A very short time after the change in Mrs. Woudbe's temper, Rosa was, in form, invested with all the honours of a confidential friend; knowing, as the lady said, the goodness as well as sensibility of her nature, she would commit to her the secret sorrow which too fatally affected her temper and embittered all her enjoyments.

Poor Mrs. Woudbe's parents, though ancient gentry, had, she said, the misfortune to be reduced to the necessity of accepting pecuniary aids from Mr. Woudbe.

This, as far as related to the poverty of her parents, Rosa well understood; for Mr. Woudbe, who had no idea of hiding his candle under a bushel, was, particularly after supper, by no means ashamed of telling the exact sum he allowed them.

But poor Mrs. Woudbe had a natural brother, the son of her father by an amiable foreigner, who was inexpressibly dear to her, and though the most amiable of men, so unaccountably obnoxious to her husband, that he would not hear him named: now this dear brother, who had been unfortunate, had

had a lovely wife and a large family of helpless children, with no dependence but on her.

Mrs. Woudbe sighed; alas! he was her dear and only brother. Rosa wept; and the finale of this moving history was, a request on the part of the distressed relation, that Rosa would receive this dear brother's letters under her cover, as Mr. Woudbe forbade her corresponding with him; and as the post letters being carried to his compting-room, he might know the hand, and be displeased with his innocent wife; Rosa consented and became a dearer creature than ever.

Mrs. Woudbe's brother was a very constant correspondent, and his sister's good humour continuing, she had leisure to resume her plan of book-writing, and in order to out-Herod Herod, in the description of black forests, dark woods, and rushing torrents, took the whim of night rambling; sometimes through a wilderness at the back of the house, to a cascade of water that fell into a large basin; at others to a thick-grove, at the extremity of the park, and this often in weather

that

that *should* endear a comfortable fire-side, for the express purpose of writing up to the deformed side of nature. Mr. Woudbe, who was at all times exceedingly proud of seeing his wife's name in the newspapers, provided nothing impertinent glanced at the tender points, either in his character or hers, encouraged her scribbling mania; and, at the hours when she retired to her closet, to begin the notable history, which, before a single line was wrote, she christened the Grim Abbess, or Dumb Nun of St. Bog-and-moat, an embargo was laid on the speech of all the domestics, who were also provided with flannel socks to move about in, that no interruption might be given the coming wonder.

But, notwithstanding so much care and study, the literary brat remained in embryo: The lady wrote very bad—spelt worse—and, what was not to be remedied, invented worse than all; so that neither the stillness of the dreary country, the fine, free hand-writing of Rosa, nor evening rambles among trees in the dark, assisted the Grim Abbess, or Dumb Nun of Bog-and-moat.

Mr.

Mr. Woudbe was disappointed; but as the lady promised to write next year, and as that promise was a kind of implied agreement to return to the country next year, he agreed to go to town, and give her the reins in all preparations for the masquerade.

Well might Rosa consider the last four months as a lapse in her extraordinary life; for though, since she had become Mrs. Woudbe's confidante in the affair of her dear natural brother, she could form no wish within the walls of Mr. Woudbe's house, or the paling of his park, but what was even anticipated; yet, the kindness was too systematical, too uniform, and too studied, to excite any of the thrilling sensations, the grateful enthusiasm, which were raised by every word and look of Lady Gauntlet; but the joyful break, which letters from that charming woman, made on the sameness of her life, were no more; she had ceased to answer, which was equal to declining to receive letters; and she had never heard from poor John. That London, which was the haven of happiness to Mrs. Woudbe, had

nothing in it for her; nor did that country she was so eager to leave afford one object to please or to regret.

She was now, in the very bloom of her days, literally wasting her sweets in the desert air; the insipidity of her existence naturally cast a cloud over her once cheerful temper: true, she was no longer exposed to insult or distress; but with Mrs. Woudbe, all her good sense, accomplishments, and fine taste, were as much buried as they could have been among the Shetland fishermen; for, in spite of that Lady's invariable kindness, she often perceived her company and conversation were irksome.

Thus left to a few such books as were relished by mere country misses, or to the tormenting retrospect of past scenes, in which the one image she wished to forget was always predominant, her fancy took a retrograde turn, and rested in anguish on the past, without one hopeless glance at what was to come.

Meanwhile the preparations for town went on; the day was fixed—Mr. Woudbe's savings

savings put him in good-humour; he presented his wife with a bill of a thousand pounds, to begin the season in London, and an order for a pearl necklace of five hundred pounds price on his jeweller. All, therefore, was halcyon with Mrs. Woudbe, who also insisted on Rosa's acceptance of a bank note of fifty pounds, to make purchases equal to the honourable station of her companion.

C H A P. II.

Low life above stairs.

“ Ye tinsel insects whom a Court maintains,
“ That count your beauties only by your stains,
“ Spin all your cobwebs o'er the eye of day,
“ The muse's wing shall brush you all away.”

“ **Y**ESTERDAY Mr. and Mrs. Woudbe, with a grand retinue, arrived at their house in Portman-square, from their seat in Dorsetshire.”—So said the newspapers, and what was rather out of their way, they said truth.

One of Mrs. Woudbe's first visits was to Madame La Croix; whither, Rosa was pleased she was not invited to accompany her; as still adhering to the commands of her patroness, she resolved to pay her duty in Pall-Mall, before

fore she was seen any where else; and accordingly, having borrowed Mr. Woudbe's coach the first morning after their arrival in town, she was announced to Lady Gauntlet at her usual breakfast hour.

The Countess of Gauntlet had no longer an interest in the affairs of the Beggar, as Lord Denningcourt had taken himself from the polite world in a more extraordinary manner than he had lately lived in it. His dislike to his bride elect, which took firm root at the time Rosa was fainting at Mushroom Place, increased so rapidly, that, before he left that elegant seat, it was improved into downright aversion. He had struggled in vain with his feelings; he was a few thousands already in debt, and had only as few hundreds to support the dignity of his peerage: he was, as Mr. Feversham said, "As proud as Lucifer, and as poor as Timon." It was therefore a difficult point to give up eighty thousand pounds; but Lord Denningcourt was not appalled by difficulties; before the marriage articles were signed, and after he had been made the happy husband of one of

Sir Solomon Mushroom's co-heiresses in all the papers, he left his P. P. C. at Mushroom House, and had since only been heard of by report; which stated, that he had retired to his old castle in the north with a young girl, of whom he was fond, to vegetate in obscurity.

As whenever the Countess of Gauntlet had happened to meet the ungrateful Denningcourt, she was actually disposed to fancy herself deeply in love, the indifference with which her tender regard had been received, could not be expected to leave an impression on her mind, favourable to any request of his; but though she owed nothing to Lord Denningcourt, she was too politic to fail in respect to herself.

No woman could manifest less regard to the censure of the world than her ladyship, yet it was not possible to be more tenacious of a certain impression, which she had successfully substituted for character, and which actually had in many points softened, and in others dropped a veil over the most flagrant and immoral actions: that sweet and insinuating

ting softness—that irresistible suavity of manner—that polite affability—that nameless grace, which, in a voice of the most perfect harmony, gave utterance to more than words, and fascinated the faculties as well as sight—that dangerous delusion, which, darting from her melting eyes, sunk into the soul, were all the effect of deep study and consummate art.

The reader already knows both Lord and Lady Gauntlet were well received in the most moral court in Europe; and his lordship had a handsome appointment there, procured by the interest of his Countess; the necessity, therefore, of silencing some, buying off others, and mollifying all she possibly could of the indignant sufferers by her detestable immorality, and by her successful deceit, is obvious: she was indeed so sensible of the advantage of a good report, even from her lowest dependants, that she had reduced smiles and affability to a regular system. Rosa, the mere child of nature, was in reality what Lady Gauntlet so finely acted; but as what in the one was the spontaneous display of an

artless mind, was in the other attained with the utmost labour and difficulty ; it was as natural for her ladyship to suspect the sincerity of Rosa, as it was for Rosa to believe Lady Gauntlet all she appeared.

Conscious of her own secret motives for the kindness she had shewn to Rosa, Lady Gauntlet dared not throw off the mask, least they should become too palpable to be mistaken even by the silly Mrs. Woudbe.

She had, in the security of her empire over her victims, affected to smile at, nay, even pity the pangs of many a deserted wife, and many a disappointed mistress ; and, in more than one instance, while she rived the soul of affection, and planted daggers into the fond and wedded heart of her *friend*, so contrived to time her tears, so patiently to endure sorrow, as to appear to the faithless husband, herself the amiable sufferer, and the injured wife, the merciless offender. But to give the world reason to suppose,—nay, to admit to herself, that her advances were repelled, and her charms seen with indifference, was torture even she could not bear; therefore, civility

civility to her *protégée* was politic, if not necessary.

Rosa, transported to find herself received with unchanged kindness, could not contain the grateful effusions of her guileless heart; and so powerful is the emanation of virtuous enthusiasm, it affected even Lady Gauntlet.

When her first emotions were subsided in a flood of tears, Lady Gauntlet, in mere regard for the interest of her *protégée*, drew from her all she thought of the Woudbes; as well as the secret of the natural brother, which, indeed, was the only part of the communication that appeared at all new to her; for though her description of Mrs. Woudbe's elegant retreat was proved so erroneous, and their treatment of Rosa, the much greater part of the winter, so different from what she expected, all passed as matter of course, except the sisterly affection of the lady for her unfortunate brother, which was a theme of so much interest, she had it repeated over and over; and, in return, acquainted Rosa with the strange conduct of Lord Denningcourt, to which she added

D 5 hints,

hints, that her own son, Lord Delworth, was a candidate for the fair hand of the forsaken lady; that Lord Lowder, having unfortunately lost all his bets for the last two years, had been obliged to try his fortune in another climate, leaving his beautiful Countess to be consoled by his handsome relation, Sir Jacob Lydear, who being in the same unfortunate habit of betting on all occasions, and seldom failing, like his lordship, to lose, was in a way like him also, to be obliged to change the scene. Satire came blunted from the beautiful mouth of Lady Gauntlet; it indeed seemed to change its nature; and what would have disgusted Rosa from any other person, amused her as the effusions of perfect good-humour from her amiable patroness.

Lord Lowder abroad, Lord Denning-court in the country, and Sir Jacob so engaged between consoling the bewitched widow and betting, there could be no danger from him; what then had Rosa to fear, while happy in the continued regard of the most amiable woman in the world, who, all condescension, requested she would inform Mrs.

Woudbe

Woudbe, that her box at the opera was at her service, her daughters being on a visit with their intended sister-in-law at Mushroom Place, and herself just setting off for Windsor—though she would not leave town without first sending her chair to leave a card at dear Mrs. Woudbe's door.

Rosa returned to Portman-square delighted and to be delighted:—the report of the coming masquerade was already disseminated among the idlers of fashion. Who knew Mrs. Woudbe?—Nobody. Who wished on this occasion to know her?—Every body. The door was thronged with carriages;—Duchesses, Countesses, and simple Ladies, with all the beautiful unmarried women in town, left cards; and many a proud name, to whose persons Mrs. Woudbe was an absolute stranger, whose notices she dared not even hope for, said, in indirect terms, “Pray, ma'am, invite me to your masquerade.”

The humble visitors who were usually admitted to eat Mr. Woudbe's dinners, and flatter his wife, could not now gain admittance:

All was agreeable bustle;—painters, carpenters, artificial flower-makers, musicians, confectioners, milliners, mantua and robe-makers, thronged the hall, shouldering each other for precedence.

Rosa, to whom the scene was in every respect perfectly new, and who, with all the humble consciousness of her own mean origin, was very much disposed to respect high rank, notwithstanding the specimen Lord Lowder had given her of certain manners, run over the cards, and was particularly struck with one, on which the names of the Countess of Denningcourt and Miss Angus were written.

“The Countess of Denningcourt!” exclaimed Rosa.

“I am myself surprised,” cried Mrs. Would-be.

Not Lady Gauntlet’s chair, but herself, was in that moment announced. The report of the masquerade had reached her ladyship just as she was stepping into her travelling-chaise to set off for Windsor; but as she would want at least a dozen tickets for herself

self and friends, she could not possibly risk giving Mrs. Woudbe reason to doubt the warmth of her attachment, so was in time to join her in surprise at seeing the Countess of Denningcourt's card on Mrs. Woudbe's table.

" 'Tis the Countess Dowager," said she, addressing Rosa. " Sure, the odd woman is not already weary of her lozenge; or perhaps she wants to exhibit her lunatic protégée on masquerade."

" I rather think, with submission to your ladyship," joined Mr. Woudbe, " it is Miss Angus; who, in order to get a ticket, has left her aunt's card, by way of introducing her own."

As Rosa always concluded Kattie Bahanun was carried off by Mr. Angus, she could not hear the name without emotion.

" I shall invite her brother," said Mrs. Woudbe.

" A fine young fellow enough, but very stupid," answered the Countess. " He dined in our party one Sunday at Lowder's, and brought with him a strange creature from Scotland,

Scotland, whom I remember, though placed by the Countess at my table—I thank her—would not play. If you wish to be amused, invite him too. Cameron—Doctor Cameron, I think, was his ugly name."

"Oh, dear madam!" cried Rosa, out of breath with emotion, "he is the best—the very best of men." But recollecting that his being in company with a man who seduced his ward, the daughter of his deceased friend, could not be reconciled to the action of the best, the very best of men, she added, "I—I believe——"

The ladies both laughed.

"*You, you believe!*" said Lady Gauntlet. "Well, I am glad you have your doubts; for certainly it would be a pity so ugly and strange a mortal should be the best—the very best."

Rosa was silent. She thought no more of the cards, though requested by Mrs. Woudbe to sort them. Poor Kattie Buanun! hid, perhaps, in some obscure part of the world, while her seducer was received into the society of even such good women.

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as Lady Gauntlet occupied her thoughts, and from her they naturally recurred to the Major, Castle Gowrand, and the burn-side. Her agitation increased; she was obliged to retire.

The ladies looked at each other.—

“Mighty odd this,” cried the Countess.

“I think so,” said her friend.

“I have a notion she is Scotch herself,” cried Lady Gauntlet.

Mrs. Woudbe looked all wonder: she thought the Countess was well acquainted with her family and connection.

The Countess was never at a loss. “With her family,” she said; “but who knew what connection a young girl so handsome might make.”

“But her country?”

“She had been recommended from the north;” but her ladyship had not another moment to stay, her carriage waited; and had Mrs. Woudbe been less engrossed by the masquerade preparation, she might have found out some little contradiction in her friend’s account of Rosa; but having so many charming things to think of, and having also an

idea, that such a beautiful a girl as Rosa doing the honour of her house, would really attract company thither, on less public occasions, and moreover other private reasons to be satisfied with her companion, whatever point of the compass she came from, she did not embarrass her with questions of curiosity, when she rejoined her, and expressed her regret at finding Lady Gauntlet gone.

The next evening Mrs. Woudbe signified her intention to avail herself of Lady Gauntlet's offer of her box, and desired Rosa to chuse a head dress for the occasion at La Croix's, at her expence; but though the cause of restraint no longer existed, Rosa having omitted to mention it to her patroness, declined going there, and Mrs. Woudbe obligingly chose a very handsome turban and feathers for her herself.

The splendour of the spectacle, the music, dancing, and company, were no less new than pleasing to our Beggar. Mrs. Woudbe knew every lady, and there were some few women, and many men, who knew her; and whether from the report of her masquerade,

rade, or the uncommon beauty of her companion, or both, the box was soon crowded. Among the many who fixed a scrutinizing eye on our heroine, she recognized the constant visitor of Madame La Croix, and politely returned his low bow.

"Do you know Lord Aron?" said Mrs. Woudbe.

"Lord Aron!" repeated Rosa, with surprise.

"Lord Aron Horsemagog—you know him—you bowed to him."

"I know him now," answered Rosa, "and am astonished I did not before recollect his features; though indeed I have heard much more than I ever saw of his lordship; my personal knowlede of him, till I saw him in London, was very transient."

"You met him at Lady Gauntlet's, I suppose," said Mrs. Woudbe, carelessly; "he is a great admirer of pretty women."—

Lord Aron had now got near the back of Rosa's chair, and uttered a profusion of soft nothings to Mrs. Woudbe, while his eyes were fixed on her companion; indeed it seemed.

seemed to be the rage of the evening, to flatter one lady, and stare the other out of countenance ; for such a number of men succeeded each other, during the whole evening, who did nothing else, that Rosa was disgusted, and tired even of music before the opera was over.

Mrs. Woudbe undauntedly led the way to the coffee-room, her spirits exhilarated and her colour heightened by that adulation of which she had so sensibly felt the loss.

Here again the men, even those who did not take the trouble to speak, crowded round to gaze, and Rosa, ready to sink with confusion, looking about in hope of escaping the general observation, had nearly shrieked at the sight of Mr. Montreville talking to Lord Aron Horsemagog, and both earnestly observing her.

As, after the first surprize, nothing could be more natural than for a gentleman, with whom she had been acquainted, and from whom she had received such services, to say nothing of his avowed passion, to address her; in the full expectation he would do so, she summoned

summoned every principle of proper pride, of delicacy, and of sense to the aid of her fortitude, secretly exulting that the respectability of her appearance and situation would render the rencounter less embarrassing on her side, than if she had met him in the same circumstance in which she left Pontefract; but it is impossible to describe her feelings when, though she perceived his attentions were still fixed on her, he made no motion towards addressing her, not even a recognizing bow.

Astonished at a conduct which, considering every circumstance, was little less than insult; painfully oppressed by the gaze of the increasing crowd, and less able to support the heat, from the excess of her agitation, she could but just articulate a request to Mrs. Woudbe to remove, if possible, out of the crowd.

Intoxicated as that lady was with renovated vanity, a more *mal a propos* request could not have been made; “Presently,” said she, turning a willing ear to some fine things Duke Evergreen was whispering close to her cheek. Rosa, no longer able to bear her situation, became

came courageous from wounded pride and harrowed feeling; she made a desperate effort, and pushing through the crowd with burning cheeks, and eyes suffused with tears, which she made every effort to conceal, gained the passage, and happening to turn to the right door, saw Mrs. Woudbe's servants, who concluding their mistress was coming, opened a chair, which conveyed her to the carriage before they found their mistake; the men then returned, and it is hard to say whether the sensation of indignation or sensibility were most painful, when she beheld Montreville and Lord Aron, though not together, each watching her motions.

Lord Aron advanced to the opposite side of the coach from where Montreville stood, and bluntly lamented her sudden removal from La Croix; it was his intention, he said, to offer her *terms* and place her in a better situation every way than that in which, after all his vain enquiries he now found her, and though certainly her value was lessened by being with Mrs. Woudbe, and her close connection with Lady Gauntlet, yet such was

his

his present favourable sentiments, he would do any thing to—

Mrs. Woudbe was not a little angry when she perceived Rosa had left her, but common decency would not allow her to remain, after the young person she *chaproned* had quitted the coffee room alone ; she therefore instantly followed, and the chair reached her coach in the moment Lord Aron was professing what he would do to make Rosa happy.

Mrs. Woudbe entered the carriage in very ill humour, and Rosa was in no disposition to attempt to break her angry silence ; both the manner and matter of Lord Aron's address, astonished and confounded her ;— “ he meant to offer her terms ! to place her in a situation superior to that in which he found her ! her value lessened by living with Mrs. Woudbe ! ” this was a strange mode of expression, and she could no other way interpret it, than that he intended offering himself to her acceptance, and thought her consequence lowered by living in a dependent situation ; but what could he mean about

Lady

Lady Gauntlet ? surely it would honour any situation to be closely connected with her ! but be his meaning what it would, how light was the attention he excited, compared with the burning torture which, though it could neither be called anger, indignation, nor grief, swelled her bosom almost to bursting, when she thought on Montreville, and when she contrasted his behaviour now, with what it had been.

She retired to her chamber the moment they got home, excused herself from supper, and was walking up and down the room in agony, when Mts. Woudbe's woman entered, to desire that she would not go to rest, for that her mistress begged to speak with her after supper.

Every thing she now saw, heard, or expected, was full of Montreville ; " particular business ! "—she trembled and promised obedience.

Yes, the business must concern him ; what could he have to say ? could he suppose her mean enough to forgive ?—oh never, never ! —what ! to be treated with marked contempt ! could

could he palliate that?—impossible!—time now crept;—the tardy moments lingered till she was summoned to Mrs. Woudbe, who too intent on her own affairs, to mark the eager look of Rosa, as she watched the expected particular business from Montreville, bid her, in a low voice, shut the door.

Now then—and Rosa's heart beat through her stays.—

Now then—Mrs. Woudbe hesitatingly told her, that she had a commission of the utmost importance to entrust to her—she must take her casket of jewels to Madame La Croix's, before eleven the next morning, and deliver them to her dear natural brother, who would meet her there to receive them.

The disappointed Rosa burst into tears.

Mrs. Woudbe, whose tremulous voice spoke an inward agitation she could with extreme difficulty conquer, and whose inflamed eye told a tale of secret anguish, caught the infection; indeed, without betraying secrets, which it is the duty of the author to keep at present inviolable, we may venture to say, whatever were the pangs which rent the bosom

som of the virtuous Rosa, thoſe that ſwelled in the guilty ſoul of Mrs. Woudbe, were equally excruciating.

Supposing that the tears of her humble companion were excited by ſympathy for her, and perhaps fearing a too nice inquisition in conſequence, Mrs. Woudbe endeavoured to assume a cheerful aspect.

“ It is certainly very provoking,” ſaid ſhe, “ just on the eve of my masquerade, when, as I have you to take the trouble off my hands, I intended to have worn all my own jewels, and hire ſome others; but I will explain the affair to you:—that brother, that dear, though natural brother, has been wronged out of a great fortune; nay, he is even heir to a title;—he is about to make an effort, which the Chancellor owns muſt be ſuccesful, to recover his natural right; but though justice is on his ſide, he muſt also have money; I have already aſſisted him with the thouſand pounds Mrs. Woudbe gave me, but that is insufficient; a friend of his will advance what more he wants on my jewels; when the cauſe is got, which it certainly will, they

they will be restored ; 'tis hard, but I cannot refuse my brother."

Such great and almost unexampled proofs of fraternal regard, struck Rosa with astonishment ; if it were carried to excess, if it were a fault, that excess and that fault was so accordant to her own generous disinterested feelings, that it exalted Mrs. Woudbe almost to a level with the virtuous Lady Gauntlet ; and if that lady's injunction occurred at all in this moment, considering none of the consequences her patronels apprehended from Lord Denningcourt's discovering her residence, could possibly happen, and that the peace of the best of sisters, and the fate of her dear natural brother was at stake, she resolved to risk even doing wrong, that right might come of it ; and faithfully promising to be at the appointed time at Madame La Croix's, carried the jewels with her to her chamber, where again the image of the rude, the insolent Montreville assailing her imagination, it was not probable she would, by oversleeping, forget she was to be in — street by eleven.

A hackney coach being called, according to Mrs. Woudbe's directions, to convey her to Madame La Croix, she placed herself and the jewels in it, her head aching for want of rest, and her heart infinitely too big for her bosom, still dwelling on the very same being she now discovered watching the carriage as it drove from Portman-square.

However Montreville contrived it, he was near Madame La Croix's door when she alighted; but though her eyes met his, he kept up his stubborn reserve, without shewing, by a lock, he had ever seen her before.

Thus haunted by the perseverance of the unaccountable Montreville, Rosa resolved, whatever were her feelings, to conceal them under affected ease, and gaily running up the steps, being seen by Madame, was met and embraced by her with every demonstration of joy, even before the door closed.

Rosa's errand, which was to deliver a packet to a gentleman from Mrs. Woudbe, explained to Madame the situation she was in; but nothing, she declared, ever astonished her so much as the secret made of it, which Rosa did

did not think right immediately to explain ; and Madame, who was a very good distinguisher between what was, and what was not fit to be told, acquiesced.

Eleven, twelve, one, two, three o'clock struck ; no dear natural brother appeared. Mrs. Woudbe, fearing some accident had happened to her jewels, her companion, or her natural brother, drove up to the door ; and hearing, to her astonishment, that the former were yet in Rosa's possession, directed her to carry them home, and proceeded to pay some morning visits.

On Rosa's return to Portman-square, she found a letter addressed to her, which, as she saw by the hand writing, was for Mrs. Woudbe, she delivered as soon as that lady returned from her visits.

This letter had a terrible effect on poor Mrs. Woudbe ; she had the horrors, the hysterics, and every thing a fine lady, very much vexed, in full health ought to, or indeed, could have ;—the ungrateful natural brother, charged her with designing to betray him, by having sent her companion with a spy ;—he

even, unnatural wretch ! threatened to expose and betray her to her husband !

The innocent woman, who well knew she had set no spies on him, and who trembled at his threat, flew to Rosa, and read more of the letter than could be possibly understood by any but herself.

Rosa, in her zeal to pacify the agitation of Mrs. Woudbe, acknowledged, she believed her coach was followed by a gentleman from Portman-square ; and that she afterwards saw him standing opposite Madame La Croix's house, but insisted he could have no motive to watch Mrs. Woudbe's brother.

Poor Mrs. Woudbe remained in the greatest possible consternation, till at length, her husband going out, she begged Rosa to walk to a coach-stand with her, and having set her down at Madame La Croix's, left her there, while she, it is presumed, went to enquire after her natural brother.

Madame La Croix's kindness to Rosa seemed to have encreased, even in the last short absence ; she offered to make her a present of a beautiful dress, for the grand night at

at Mrs. Woudbe's, and press'd it on her with a warmth of attachment, which, though not accepted, was yet done in so feeling a manner she could not be angry at the offer ; the dress, however, was very pretty ; Rosa asked the price ; it was infinitely cheaper than she could have expected ; and whatever were Madame's motives, she did not ask half the original cost ; but pretty, it certainly was, and the temptation was not to be resisted, more especially as it was so great a bargain ; and as Mrs. Woudbe's present was yet unchanged, it was but just that credit should be done her generosity on so public an occasion.

Mrs. Woudbe returned in a state of unspeakable anxiety ; she had not succeeded in her search after her angry brother, and was obliged to have recourse to her old mode of writing to him, which indeed would have been most expeditious, as well as certain, had her impatience not outrun reflection.

Mr. Woudbe, who was at home first, had heard news respecting the Earl of Gauntlet, he was so impatient to impart to his wife, that he was a little peevish at her absence ;—“ It

was an odd hour, he thought for her to *walk out* ;" but the preparations for an entertainment, which was to be graced by all that was either noble or ignoble among the first people, by the beautiful Lady Charlottes, Louisas, Georginas, Carolines, &c. &c. and by all the half-mad, and half dead sprigs of quality, was an apology for every thing ; so the tea and the news were served together.

The scandalous chronicle run thus :—The rightful heir of the noble family of the Gauntlets, had been spirited away, nobody but the present Earl and Countess, and their confidential friend Sir Solomon Mushroom, could guess how or where ; and he now suddenly appeared to claim his alienated rights, supported by his mother and her family, who were also in the female line, direct descendants from the same noble stock : the question was to be brought to issue the ensuing term ; the great lawyers were all engaged, and public curiosity on the stretch.

As nothing in Rosa's opinion could be so unlikely, as that her patroness should be privy to a base action, she only felt interested in
the

the event of the news; as no doubt the claimant was an impostor, and her respected friend would triumph over her enemies, since the barbarous truth, that such a woman had enemies, could not be controverted.

Mrs. Woudbe's varying cheek spoke more eloquently of her feelings, in her husband's intelligence; and what most astonished Rosa was, the ease with which she gave up the interest of her dear and charming friend, the Countess of Gauntlet, as well as discovering that she was a much more perfect mistress of the subject, than either Mr. Woudbe or the scandalous chronicle.

"The Earl and Countess of Gauntlet were," she said, "two grand impostors, and the developement of their actions would explain to the world a mystery that had long puzzled it, which was, the continued intimacy between the Gauntlets and the Mushrooms."

"Good God! madam," interrupted Rosa, her face and neck glowing with outraged friendship, "do *you*, *you* who are honoured with the confidence of Lady Gauntlet, im-

plicate her in so abominable a transaction ! you who are her bosom friend ! you who—”

Mr. Woudbe took the word from Rosa, and with an air of irony proceeded—“ you on whom for more than a twelve month she condescended not only to live herself, but to intrude to your table her best friend, one of the first men in the kingdom, when he had no dinner of his own, and when she did not chuse to give him any herself.”

Mrs. Woudbe smiled, and Rosa, unable to comprehend, and unwilling to believe, left the good couple to themselves, and retired to hate and detest the impertinent Montreville.

The next day, it may be concluded, all was right between the affectionate sister and her natural brother ; for the jewels were gone, tranquility restored, and all the attention of the family taken up with the approaching masquerade.

As the day drew near, Mrs. Woudbe recollect^{ed}, that among the number of men to whom she had sent tickets, as mementos of old acquaintance, there might be some not so nice in their connection, or so strict in

their

their respect to her, as to refuse to gratify the curiosity of naughty creatures, who were not of a rank to sin with impunity : now this idea was excessively distressing, and she consulted her husband on the means most likely to prevent women of no character from contaminating her roof.

Mr. Woudbe was pleased at her nicety, but in the present state of things he thought it would be an Herculean labour, " For," said he, " you would not affront any of the great men who have been so kind to you."

" Certainly not," replied the lady ; " but I would prevent their affronting me, by bringing any of their new favorites under my nose."

" Nay, my dear, you are now talking gibberish," answered the astonished husband, " but suppose I stand at the door and take the tickets myself."

" And what end will that answer?"

" Every end you can wish ; for I defy a wanton woman to escape *my* detection, if she wore a mask a foot thick."

Mrs. Woudbe was glad to turn her front to the fire ; for, though she had, on the experience of some score of years, reason to doubt her husband's sagacity, at discovering a wanton woman, even without a mask, as, in the zeal of his offer, he happened to fix his eyes directly into hers, conscience, which cannot be stifled by all persons, at all times, gave a twinge which occasioned Mrs. Woudbe to complain of cold and to stir up the fire.

Mr. Woudbe thought again and again on the offer he had spontaneously made, and the more he pondered on the business, the more he was pleased with himself for hitting on an expedient, so suitable to his own abilities, and so calculated to prevent the delicacy of his wife from being outraged by improper company.

Mrs. Woudbe, considering that the office of door-keeper, where her husband would not keep out, but let in a few of the good friends who had conferred many an unknown favour on him, would actually keep him too much engaged to make observations, applauded the readiness of his invention, and the

the obliging motive that suggested it;—so, that every thing might be in the true spirit of masquerade, a porter's great coat was ordered for the master of the house, and his station fixed in the hall.

Nothing could exceed the taste of the decorations, and entertainment of this grand night.

Rosa, who could apprehend nothing improper in the part assigned her, which was to receive the masks, most of whom she knew, and all of whom she concluded, were people of rank and character, was as highly delighted at a sight so novel and harmless, as the grotesque and whimsical appearance of the figures who passed her in succession, many of whom paid her the most extravagant compliment on her beauty.

Mrs. Woudbe wore a mask and Domino herself, great part of the evening, but changed her dress, and unmasked before supper.

At an hour past midnight the rooms were, as usual, so crowded, that Rosa, who, spoken to by every body, was also obliged to answer every body, overcome by heat and fatigue,

left the rooms, and leaning over the rail of the stair bannister, was fanning herself, when a figure, she had before observed to hover near her, in a black robe, starred over to personify Night, approached her.

“Beauty like yours,” said the figure, “cannot escape the eye of admiration, but under my cover.”

“Really!” said a barrister, who had also continued near her, “my brief informs me that the most radiant beauty may sometimes retire from the gaze of admiration, while the sun is at meridian.”

“Perhaps so,” returned Night sharply; “but there are whose actions require the cover of night, even though their beauty be scorched by the garish sun.”

There was a rude acrimony in the manner of the last speaker, which disgusted, and without exactly knowing why, alarmed our heroine.

“I can have no part in this important dispute,” said she.

“You are the object of it,” said Night, still more sharply.

“Oh,

"Oh certainly," joined the Barrister, "you are the cause before the court, and you cannot be dismissed without a verdict."

"I am not masked, gentlemen," said Rosa, with dignity.

"Report says otherwise," retorted Night.

"Report is a common lyar," cried the Barrister; "I will not believe it."

"You may possibly mistake this for wit, gentlemen, but as I do not comprehend it, I beg to pass."

The Barrister bowing made way, but incorrigible Night was immoveable; she however passed by, and returned to the rooms, followed by the two masks.

The crowd in all parts of the house was so great, and every kind of distinction so lost in the different characters; the noise, so incessant from clever people, who would find out every body, and from some, more clever, whom nobody could find out; from theatrical people, who purposely sang out of tune; from musical parties who could not sing in tune; from pedlars, barrow girls, link boys, and reel dancers; that Rosa, heartily sick of what

was

was for the first hour amusing, attempted to retire as soon as Mrs. Woudbe unmasked.

On ascending a back stair, she felt her gown touched behind, and looking back, beheld the black robed Night, and heard him sigh, "Miss Walsingham."

"Who are you, Sir?" she asked, "and why are you here? this part of the house is not open for company."

"No recess, however private, can exclude Night," he answered; "and with me it is eternal night!"

"Who are you, Sir?" repeated Rosa.

"One whom *you* have robbed of all the blessings of existence, but who would die with pleasure to snatch you from the gulph into which you are plunged."

"The gulph! I understand you not; I desire not to understand you;—you intrude, Sir; this place leads to the private apartments of the family; indeed you intrude."

"I know," replied the mask, "the voice that warns depravity of its certain destruction, must always intrude; but Miss Walsingham has

has one friend, who would yet save her ; who would recal her to innocence and peace."

" Recal ! I know not," haughtily replied Rosa, " who it is that dares, under so mean a disguise, thus insult my honor and my feelings ? but

" —know, immortal truth shall mock thy toil ;
" Immortal truth shall bid the shaft recoil
" With rage retorted, wing the deadly dart,
" And empty all its poison in thy heart."

and she attempted to pass.

" Would to God," said the mask, " the lines were more applicable to your sentiments than to your wit ! but if you are innocent, why an inmate here ? why at La Croix's ? why, oh why taught to allure and betray by the Messalma of the age ?"

" Good God !" cried Rosa, in an agony, " must I hear all this ? have I no protector nigh ?—who is this mean detractor ?—this marked—"

" Behold him !"—It was Montreville.

Rosa shrieked.

" You have alarmed the house," said he, collectedly.

" I

“ I will alarm the world, rather than insult my own honour by holding converse with *you*—equally the object of my contempt and indignation, what right have you to watch my steps? to invade my privacy, and wound my ears with falsehood? meanly presuming on my unprotected state.”

“ Unprotected! *you* unprotected! do you not know Lady Gauntlet?”

“ I am proud that I do.”

“ Very well, Madam,—and you are the companion—the confidant—the private ambassador of Mrs. Woudbe?”

“ Granted—and what is *your* objection.”

“ An inmate with the vile La Croix.”

“ The vile La Croix!—but there are praises that censure, and censures that praise.”

“ Oh Miss Walsingham, cruel and undone woman!”—

No language can paint the variety of emotions, which only could support the spirit of our heroine at this moment; she attempted to ascend the stairs—he held her gown, and hiding his face in it, actually wept.

Conscious innocence and injured honour was not thus to be appeased ; she rushed by him, at the expence of her new dress, and joined the company with pale face, disordered hair, and torn dress.

The rooms were by this time much thinner than they had been ; many of the visitors were gone—and those who remained, were in the supper rooms, unmasked ; the Barrister offered to conduct her to Mrs. Woudbe, in his own proper person Lord Aron Horse-magog—but she was unable to walk, and trembled so violently, that she accepted his offer to lead her to a seat, and take a glass of lemonade.

Lord Aron seated himself by her, and then, for the first time, observing her dishabille, exclaimed with surprise, “ What is the meaning of this ? have we had a Tarquin here, *under cover of Night ?* ”

Rosa blushed deeply : his lordship spoke with particular emphasis to her more particular feelings. After steadily observing her a few moments, he again called the blood into her cheeks, by asking what Mon-

treville

treville had done? "Come," he added, "I know he is an old favourite of yours."

"Indeed!" answered she, with renovated spirits, "did he tell you so?"

"N—n—not absolutely, but one must be blind not to perceive it; and though love be sometimes hood-winked, and I certainly love you very much; it is at other times clear-sighted enough—as for instance, I again tell you, Montreville is an old favourite of yours—deny it if you dare."

"I detest him."

"One is apt to do that, when an old friend is so wicked as to get a new one."

"You are mistaken, my lord; I have seen Mr. Montreville before—but—I dislike him more than—"

"More than me, I hope."

"More than any body."

"You are so handsome, you have a right to dislike any thing, except your own face; but there are some foolish women who think Montreville tolerable—Here is our hostess coming to inquire after you—shall we ask her opinion?"

Mrs.

Mrs. Woudbe was really sauntering down the room, seemingly on the look about for something or somebody, and, without waiting Rosa's answer, Lord Aron asked her if she knew young Montreville?

Rosa's own surprise and confusion, when she saw him in the coffee-room of the opera-house, could not exceed that manifested by the seasoned Mrs. Woudbe.

"Know him—yes;—no—that is, I have seen—I do not—"

"Well," demanded Lord Aron, without seeming to attend to her embarrassment; "and what do you think of him? is he not a devilish fine fellow?"

Mrs. Woudbe's confusion was even painful to herself, and could not escape the observation of Rosa; but all parties were at that moment relieved by the entrance of Lady Gauntlet and her party, as a group of Turks, male and female—the latter covered with jewels.

Every body crowded round;—half a dozen prettier women were seldom seen together than Lady Lowder, the Earl's daughters, and

and Miss Mushroom; and they must have shared the admiration with any body but the Countess of Gauntlet. Their escorts were the Earl of Gauntlet, his sons, (Lord Delworth and the Major) Sir Solomon Mushroom, and Sir Jacob Lydear; and these followed by a group of more elegant figures, who did not unmask.

Happily, as Rosa in her then state of mind thought it, the whole group, followed by the crowd, passed close without noticing her—not even the good Lady Gauntlet sent one eye-beam towards the place where she sat, alone—Lord Aron having gone to pay his respects to one of the masks.

Lady Lowder's jewels and her sister's pearls were particularly splendid; their dresses tasteful, their rouge well laid on, and their hearts perfectly in unison with the gaiety of their appearance; and they were, particularly Miss Mushroom, so caressed by her patroness, that if ever the baneful passion of envy entered the bosom of Rosa, it was at this moment, when contrasting her own internal wretchedness with their content—her deranged and half-

torn

torn dress, with their elegance and fashion—her dependance and poverty, with their power and riches.

Thus dejected, and in the midst of elegance and profusion, more deeply sighing than when poverty and even want menaced, she sat, with her eyes fixed on the ground, lost to every object present.

Two ladies, whom she had not attracted, happened to be seated exactly behind her, one of them, moved by the evident despondence of her looks, addressed her, and in an accent to which her heart was familiar, “ broad Scotch,” hoped she was not ill, though the fatigues of the evening must have wearied one whose attentions were so very obliging.

Rosa bowed, as fixing her languid eyes earnestly on the lady’s face, she endeavoured to recollect features which struck her as having some where known.

“ Dear Angus,” cried the other lady, “ you see every body has followed them to the supper-room; we shall lose lady Hopely.”

“ Lady

“Lady Hopely!” cried Rosa, starting up, her face and gesture all animation.

The ladies, who had not before observed her deranged dress, now looked first at her, then at each other; the one, who was dressed as Miss Angus, and who was sister to the Honourable Mr. Angus, cast a glance of pity at her, and of wonder at her companion, while she, “the Miss Bruce” we have before mentioned, who had the misfortune to have a very large pair of dull, near-sighted eyes, put up her glass, and bursting into a loud laugh, put her arm under that of Miss Angus, and pulled her away.

Rosa’s eyes followed them in search of Lady Hopely; they walked out of that room into another—still she followed, where, chatting with some of the last party who entered, she beheld the woman who honoured the British peerage.

Fixed like a statue, Rosa stood waiting for the breaking up the conversation in which she saw Lady Hopely engaged, when, the young ladies having joined her, they came

down the room towards where she placed herself, so as to attract her ladyship's notice.

The younger of the ladies was speaking to her on a subject, which, though exceedingly laughed at by the large-eyed lady, rather seemed to shock than amuse either Lady Hopely or Miss Angus. Rosa continued earnestly watching their approach, when she saw them start, and heard the dull-eyed lady, pointing towards her, say, "That is she."

Lady Hopely stepped back with surprise: Rosa's heart darted in gladness from her eyes; she dropped a low, respectful courtesy, and motioned to approach; but was ready to expire with mortification, when she saw the benevolent features, which, but one moment before, were irradiated by smiles and good-humour, contracting into cold reserve, and the most repelling disregard, as she passed without taking the smallest notice of her repeated courtesy, and walked down the room in earnest conversation with Miss Angus.

The first idea which struck Rosa when she lost sight of Lady Hopely, was, that, as
her

her interview with that Lady was so short, she had forgotten her, and she hastened after her to make herself known, but was again repelled by her look and manner, which had so much marked displeasure and contempt in them, as proved that, still to be forgotten, would have been much better than to be remembered with the disgust her looks pourtrayed."

"And she lives here," said Lady Hopely, in an accent of angry surprise, and turning away, "does she?"

Rosa could no longer press after Lady Hopely; but retiring directly, sick at heart, to her chamber, threw herself, without undressing, on her bed, where, after struggling almost to suffocation against an hysterical affection, she was happily relieved by a copious shower of tears, in which she indulged, till broad day-light witnessed the anguish which, *under cover of night*, had lacerated her soul, and till the last carriage having driven from the door, the wearied master and mistress, and their harassed domestics, retired to rest, when, the house becoming silent, exhausted nature sunk into an oblivion of care.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Shewing, that although the world is so full of large libraries, wise men, and good-natured women, it is possible for an innocent girl to be proved guilty of every other crime, after she has been convicted of—*Poverty!!!*

WHAT, said the inimitable writer of the tragedy of all tragedies, Tom Thumb—what is a goose pye to him who has no taste! and what, says the inimitable author of this fine novel, is the masquerade ball of a disciple of notoriety after it is over.

The dreadful lassitude, however, which rest left on Mrs. Woudbe's spirits, was elysium to the anguish which preyed not only on the ethereal, but on the corporeal sub-

stance of the poor Beggar. It was now, for the first time, that she was sensible of a pang more poignant than despair; it was ill-requited love—female pride, wounded in the most tender part—a stab to that most laudable motive for self-esteem, the having distinguished, from the herd of mankind, as its primary object, a man of honour, of principle, and of humanity; it was worse, if worse there could be, than all these combined; and the moment that unsealed her eyes from a sleep which had more of disease in it than natural rest, deluged them with tears.

She arose with violent pains in her head and limbs, and, scarcely able to support herself, reached the breakfast-room.

Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Woudbe were yet stirring, nor indeed very few of the servants. She, with difficulty, swallowed one cup of tea; and the footman who waited happening to meet her eye, with an expression in his of concern, her low spirits sunk still lower; she burst into tears, and exclaimed, “At last the blow is struck—I am going to die.”

The

The man, with great feeling and good-nature, answered, he hoped not; that, to be sure, such a kick-up as they had the last night, was enough to kill every body; but a few hours quiet rest would be the best doctor.

Rosa again said she should die—it was impossible for her ever to have a quiet rest more; and leaning back her aching head, shewed so altered a countenance, that the man, fearing she was actually going to make good her words, ran to alarm the house-keeper, who, just up, waddled into the room. All Mr. Woudbe's servants, his wife's woman and footman excepted, were of his own selection; they were therefore so far different from the household domestics of many of their gay neighbours, as to be really good for something! Mrs. Comfit, the house-keeper, besides great skill in all culinary management, was so much of a doctress, that she kept a medicine-chest for the use of the family; and, by her skill in curing colds, sore throats, corns, and the tooth-ache, saved the bills of a house-apothecary.

“ Bless her pretty face !” cried Mrs. Comfit, “ she is actually in a fever ;—oh, lud ! how her poor pulse do gallopi, gallopi ! You must go to bed, Miss.”

“ I shall go to my grave,” cried Rosa.

“ God forbid !” said the house-keeper.

“ Amen ! amen !” joined the house-maid. “ If a fever gets into this here house, after such piping-hot doings as we had last night, the Lord knows where it will stop : I think mistress should be wakeded and tould about it ;—I dare for to say as she will order Miss to be moved out on the house.”

“ God forbid !” again cried Mrs. Comfit, “ that I should ever have the honour and happiness to manage a family where honest sick folks are moved out of the house when they can’t help themselves ; for in that case, Mary, your turn or mine might come next.”

“ Amen ! amen !” again said Mary : she did not think of that before ; but, however, she hoped mistress would order Miss a nuss, because she was herself mortal afeard of a fever.

“ Afraid

"Afraid or not, Mary, she must be got to bed, and I will mix a few antimonial draughts; and if that don't do, she shall have a blister; if that don't do, she shall have James's powders; and if that don't do, why I believe we must have a poticary;—but only feel her poor pulse galloppi, gallopi!—come, Miss, you must be got to bed."

Rosa being kindly assisted by the house-keeper, and Mary, by her orders, left to administer the antimony, laid her heavy and disordered head down, with a strong presentiment she never should rise again. The strange confusion in her brain, her parched mouth, and the trembling lassitude of her limbs, all, Mrs. Comfit declared, prognosticated a strong fever; and she proved so good an augur, that, by nine in the evening, when Mrs. Woudbe arose to breakfast, and inquired after her humble companion, she was told of the indisposition which now rendered it impossible for Rosa to rise.

Mrs. Woudbe certainly was concerned, and instantly went to the chamber where Rosa lay, with a thousand vague ideas float-

ing on her brain, and as many horrible figures before her eyes, but still sensible enough to understand any questions put to her.

Mrs. Woudbe approached, and inquired, in an accent of great feeling, if Rosa had received an inclosure for her from her dear brother. The faint negative to her anxious question was a grievous disappointment: she hoped Rosa would be better in the morning, and gave particular charge every possible care and attention should be paid to—her letters!

The next morning, that is, at three P. M. as soon as Mrs. Woudbe arose, she renewed her visit and her inquiries, but found she had no longer a companion in Rosa, whose delirium was so strong, she did not even know her.

Nothing in life was so terrible to Mrs. Woudbe as the idea of death; and had her house not been large enough to allow of her living in a part quite remote from the sick chamber, she would have even preferred the old seat in Dorsetshire to remaining near it. She however, continued her solicitude respecting any

any letters that might arrive to the invalid, but entirely discontinued her visits.

Mrs. Comfit having gone through her proposed process, applied to Mr. Woudbe for a poticary. Mr. Woudbe went a step further, and ordered a physician; who, to the great dismay of the whole family, pronounced the patient to be in a malignant fever, of the contagious kind.

Never was any thing so horridly unfortunate. Mrs. Woudbe's masquerade was a sort of visit she had a right to return; and there were a few people of high rank, who, while her elegant entertainment were fresh on their memory, and while they continued to laugh at the idea of her husband being her door-keeper, actually did let them both in.

To leave her house, and of course leave town, at such a critical period, was the most afflicting of all possible things, except the risk of catching a malignant fever by staying in it. As to removing Rosa, a measure suggested by her woman, and approved by herself, Mr. Woudbe laid his flat negative against that; and the poor unfortunate lady, unable

herself to determine, asked the advice of her, not quite so esteemed friend as she had been, the Countess of Gauntlet, who happened just then to drop in; and who, if there had not been some secret reasons which militated against Mrs. Woudbe's cordial amity with that lady, would have won her heart for ever, by an invitation to her house at Windsor. As, however, the idea of living for ever so short a time, where she might enjoy the

“——Sweetest of all earthly things,

“To gaze on princes, and to talk of kings,”

was delightful, and pungent as her secret reasons were, they did not militate against *present* profession of regard for the divine Countess, she accepted the invitation, leaving Mr. Woudbe, who had not the same dread of a malignant fever, in the house with the supposed dying Rosa; not indeed, without great expression of concern on the part of both ladies, and strict orders, if any letters should happen to be left at Portman-square, for poor Miss Walsingham, they might be forwarded to Mrs. Woudbe, to be taken care

of. After which the ladies set off, with a retinue suitable to the rank of the one, and the pride of the other.

Mr. Woudbe was what his wife thought, a mighty silly, but what the world thought, a good sort of a man enough. Finding Rosa grew daily worse, or, as Mrs. Comfit expressed it, drew near to death's door, he called in a consultation of physicians, who all wrote for medicines, which were poured down her throat ; notwithstanding which, to the astonishment of the family, her youth successfully struggled against both doctors and disease ; and as soon as her strength would admit, she was, by Mrs. Woudbe's directions, removed, with a maid servant, to lodgings at Hampstead, that the house might be fumigated with vinegar, and thoroughly purified before she entered it.

Mrs. Woudbe's residence under the same roof with Lady Gauntlet, had been extremely productive of the harvest of friendship : the countess, who was always too wise to make confidante in what particularly concerned herself, happened at this period to have so many

affairs on hand, in which several other people were as much interested as herself, and which were worked by so many secret springs, and had so many jarring interests to reconcile, that a confidante, in whose discretion as well as fidelity she could rely, was a real acquisition; and it also happened that a certain grand project of Mrs. Woudbe's, no less than unmarrying the silly commoner, Mr. Woudbe, and making herself a peeress, by giving her divorced hand to another person high in her esteem, was, unknown to Lady Gauntlet, so oddly connected with her grand schemes, that both ladies were, from very different motives, interested in the same event; the visit at Windsor was, therefore, only a prelude to one the Countess invited her friend to make at Delworth House, a family seat situated in the remote part of Cumberland, where her ladyship was obliged to go, on account of her son's marriage, and where she was also willing to make one more visit, probably with some secret sentiment it would be the last.

Delworth House gave the second title to the Gauntlet family; and though their prin-

pal

pal estates lay in Ireland, and they esteemed themselves Hibernians, it was preferred by the Countess to the family mansion at Gauntlet within sixty miles of Dublin, for her summer excursion, rather than residence; as six weeks or two months were the longest period of the Earl's absence from court.

Miss Mushroom, whom the fates, the good Earl of Gauntlet, and Sir Solomon Mushroom, destined to give her fair hand to the heir of the former, Lord Delworth, had twice been crossed,—once in love, and once in ambition; great, indeed, were the sacrifices her kind uncle would have made, to induce the object of her affection to make her happy in love,—and great were the disbursements he intended, to gratify her ambition; but both the favoured, insensible men, had declined the offered bliss, with this difference of effect, the loss of the lover left a melancholy regret on the mind of the lady, the desertion of the lord filled her fair bosom with rage, and inspired an insatiable desire of revenge.

Every body knew Lord Denningcourt's poverty,—his father's having cut off the entail

of the estate, and given every thing in his power to his widow; and every body were a little suspicious that his sole motive for addressing Miss Mushroom, was to mend his fortune; therefore it was that the young lady resolved, as his old castle stood within two short miles of Lord Gauntlet's fine seat, to strike him as dead as envy could strike a faithless lord, by having her wedding celebrated with the utmost magnificence under, as she wittily expressed it, his very nose; and an adherence to this lady-like resolution, was the only article she stipulated for, in consenting to an arrangement which the Earl had convinced Sir Solomon Mushroom, would not only unite in present, but secure in future, the mutual interest of their families.

Earl Gauntlet was too courtly, and too much in the habit of being of every body's opinion, to say no to a lady; what objection, indeed, could be made to the wish of a young bride, to pass her honey-moon where she expected to live a great part of her life; for that the young couple should reside much more in the country than the Earl and Countess,

teſſ, from the nature of their ſeveral engage-
ments could do, was a part of his lordship's
arrangement.

All things being thus agreed, preparations
were making for the journey of the family of
the Gauntlets to Delworth, immediately after
the birth-day, whither Sir Solomon Muſh-
room and his family were also to follow with
all decent expedition, as ſoon as the bridal
paraphernalia were ready.

On this grand occasion, and on ſome others
not ſo grand but more important, it was,
that Lady Gauntlet wanted a female conſi-
dante; for, and it is recorded to her honour,
the minds of her own daughters were tena-
ciously kept by her, as pure and unſullied as
their persons were lovely.

Lord Delworth, a young man of no cha-
racter, who had never been famous for any
good action, but obeying the commands of
her, who commanded all the men ſhe knew;
nor for any thing bad, but contracting debts
it was impoſſible for him to pay, having been
lately inconvenienced by the demands of his
creditors, was well enough pleased to marry

a fine girl, who brought eighty thousand pounds into the family, thirty of which he was himself to touch; and of course Miss Mushroom had no reason to complain of the coldness of her third and last lover.

Before Mrs. Woudbe accepted Lady Gauntlet's invitation, it was but decent to consult Mr. Woudbe, who, for form sake, was also invited; though, as it was now May, and she knew he had projected great improvements in a new purchased estate in the neighbourhood of his son-in-law, with whom he had engaged to pass part of the summer, she expected what really happened, that he would prefer visiting his daughter, to an invitation from a lord.

Mrs. Woudbe was incapable of such a preference; but she had also another person to consult, who being of opinion that she could not be better than at Delworth, with the Countess of Gauntlet and her family, she arrived at her house in Portman-square, as soon as the fever was scoured out, to make additions to her wardrobe, and try her credit at the jeweller's; all her own diamonds and pearls being

being so entirely locked up, pressing and urgent as was her want of them on this occasion, that it was in vain to think of them.

Mr. Woudbe's fortune and credit were so well known, she had the happiness of succeeding to the extent of her wishes; and though having given away the thousand pounds, received from her husband, to prevent what he abhorred, tradesmen's bills, she had shewn away on credit the last three months, yet nothing was more easy than to go on contracting debts, nor any thing more natural than for her to hold in infinite contempt, the anger of an husband, from whom she was certain of being soon emancipated, and on whom, in her new arrangement, she would look down.

Meanwhile our heroine was suffering under all the ills of internal anguish, impaired constitution, and personal mortification.

The house, where she was placed, by recommendation of a physician, at Hampstead, was kept by a widow, who received ladies and gentlemen, boarders; most of the former were precise maidens, upright vestals, whose souls recoiled as much from impurity, as if certain propensities

propensities were, as the celebrated Nan Catley once said, “ to be caught ;” and of the latter, one was a busy prating curate ; the others trading valetudinarians, who walked to their compting houses in the morning, and returned by a sixpenny stage at four, to dine.

Rosa’s weak and slow recovery, her profound melancholy, and natural coincidence of manners, were well calculated to fix her, an unnoticed and unobtrusive member of any society. She neither interrupted the garrulity of the elder, nor the formal vanity of the younger ladies ; neither did she, by attending in any respect to her own weak health, at all inconvenience either of the city gentlemen ; the curate indeed, who added to his broad stare, and common place wit, affected admiration of her beauty, faded as it then appeared, had no reason to boast of the impression he made ; and it was to his pique, on that account, she owed the disagreeables in which she was soon after involved.

The curate made it his particular business to find our heroine, or rather to find her patronesses out ; and such was the universal odium affixed

affixed to the character of the two ladies who protected her, it was, on a consultation held in the apartment of one of the ladies, to which all the boarders were summoned, decided, that Miss Walsingham, recommended, to his great discredit by Dr. P, as a boarder to Mrs. Davis, was, on account of the lady with whom she had lived, unfit for the society of the other inmates; who agreed, n.m. con. to insist on her immediate removal; or, in failure thereof, to make arrangements for quitting the house in a body themselves.

Mrs. Davis's livelihood depended on her boarders, and her character being her chief recommendation, she was exceedingly distressed at an alternative, which, in her humble opinion, was both cruel and unjust; virtue is "always the same beloved contented thing" to congenial souls; hers was such, and she grieved at the hard task imposed on her by necessity, of hurting the feelings of an amiable creature, whose slow recovery from her fever was attended with symptoms of a less violent, but more certain period to existence; this she represented in vain to the

austere

austere judges; all she could obtain in favour of the offensive Rosa, was three days grace, during which period she would see Dr. P. and consult with him on the most proper means to be adopted in the removal of his patient, with the least injury to her health and feelings.

The ladies, who saw no necessity for the least delicacy in the business, consented to this delay with a very ill grace, and not without solemnly enacting, that no part of the pure community should sit in the parlour, except during meals, from which they should retire immediately to the ladies' apartment, where these salutary laws were made, without, on any occasion, opening their lips to the suspected party.

The last clause rather puzzled one of the founders of the statutes; for, as he was carver, and sat in that capacity at the bottom of the table, he did not see how he could do justice to Mrs. Davis, or her boarders, without sometimes addressing the latter. As this was a point, no less difficult than necessary to be settled, it occasioned no small ferment; the

the ladies, as usual, in affairs of female delicacy, all spoke together; the gentlemen not at all, till the curate, allowing speech was indispensable in the gentleman who wielded the carving knife, proposed to fix the exact latitude of conversation to be addressed to the naughty invalid; and it was agreed, without a dissenting voice, to be confined to eight words “shall I help you to some of this;” and, accordingly at the next meal, Rosa found her chair left at a dignified distance from any other seat, and sat, without being addressed, drank to, or noticed, save in the exact words before mentioned, “*shall I help you to some of this.*”

As the Beggar had that within her, which “passeth shew,” she did not, at the first meal, notice, the reserve of her nice companions; but when she found herself constantly alone in the parlour, and when one observation drew on another, surprize at the oddity of their behaviour was much stronger than mortification at their neglect; to be alone was far from a punishment; to be silent was, since her illness, become habitual; but, when the second

second day came, and she could not help seeing the scornful tosses of the female heads, the contemptuous projection of their under lips, and their eyes studiously turned away, together with the dead silence of the valetudinarians, and the pert sneer of the curate, it was impossible not to feel hurt as well as amazed.

Conscious of the rectitude of her own heart, as well as the innocence of her actions, it was difficult for her to devise the cause of an alteration so sudden, in people whom she could not have offended; and she was still less likely to attribute it to that protection which she considered as an honour, and procured by peculiar interference of Providence in her favour; but ignorance of the cause, could not shield her from the humbling effect; and after revolving it over, till she was sick of her situation, herself, and the world, it at length struck her, that she had been, by some accident, recognized for what she originally was, "a Beggar," and that the slights she now met with, were to be ascribed to that natural respect to circumstances, which is inherent to little minds. Far from feeling depressed

pressed from this idea, her spirit rose ; "They despise *me* for my poverty," said she, exultingly, " while I pity them for the want of talent, candour, sentiment and charity, which heaven has given me, and which I feel for them."

Thus reconciled to her situation, and at peace with her enemies, she thought not of removing out of reach of their malevolence, but was sitting, a book half closed before her, and her eyes fixed on its cover, when Lady Gauntlet's carriage, with three out riders, one in, and two out of, livery, stopped at the door, and her ladyship, accompanied by Mrs. Woudbe, alighted.

The little curate, who longed for a benefice ; the ladies who longed for an equipage ; and even the valetudinarian, who longed for nothing, were all in motion ; and the former, spite of the sarcasms of the lady in whose apartment the laws were made, ran down to offer his humble service to the woman, of whom every body talked, whom many execrated, and all condemned, but whom, nevertheless,

theless, it was impossible to see and not admire.

Lady Gauntlet's mouth was the natural residence of smiles, and she was so practised in the art of fascination, that no feeling of her heart ever appeared in her countenance, to the prejudice of the fine harmony of her features; she therefore sweetly thanked the little curate for the civility, which she contrived to decline, with more grace than it could have been accepted by a less happy counterfeit, and proceeded directly to our heroine, to whom she appeared like the radiant sun after a long winter, and whom her embrace warmed, not only into feeling, but ecstasy.

Among the rest of the fleeting blessings of life, the poor Beggar had with pangs of regret only inferior to that which the ingratitude of Montreville inflicted, sighed over the transient blessing of Lady Gauntlet's friendship, for transient it had appeared, as not once since her senses returned, after her delirium, had she been honoured by her notice; too exquisite and too grateful, therefore, to a heart from which every comfort had flown,

was this dear and unexpected happiness, and its effect on her weak frame was equal to that of a dire calamity,—she fainted in her arms.

“ Yes,” said Mrs. Woudbe, in a voice half choked with rage, “ the barbarous cats have killed the poor girl; and you, Mr. Parson, could you not have said something to them about the moat in their own eyes.”

Mrs. Davis, who wept over the interesting creature, whose pale cheeks could suffer little change in her present lifeless state, frightened at Mrs. Woudbe’s violence, least it should draw on her the vengeance of the “ Mr. Parson,” on whom she darted her indignant glances, cast a look of reproach at Doctor P. who had accompanied the ladies in the carriage, and followed them into the house.

The Doctor whispered Lady Gauntlet, who whispered her friend, who was immediately silent; but who, while the equally enraged Countess was all smiles, continued her scornful and fiery glances at every person she saw.

Rosa

Rosa recovered to a continued sense of happiness: Lady Gauntlet was really affected; and as *she* was implicated in the mortifications inflicted on her *companion*, Mrs. Woudbe declared she never had felt so much in her life.

"Come, my dear Miss Walsingham," said the Countess, tenderly, "let us remove you from this unfriendly house—you must return to town;—but we will give you air: you shall go with my friend Mrs. Woudbe to my seat in the north; there you shall have air and exercise, and be treated with the respect due to your family and connections."

The air of dignity and elevated tone with which her ladyship spoke, had the intended effect; it struck the little curate dumb, and humbled the tabbies, who, crowding over each other, were listening on the stairs; and, what was better than all, gave Mrs. Davis a consequence with her arrogant boarders, which was of permanent advantage.

Rosa—but faint would be every attempt to describe its effect on her;—ignorant of the real motives for her ladyship's dignified, or
for

for Mrs. Woudbe's outrageous resentment, she could only ascribe it to their affectionate concern for her; and, as the Countess well knew the real circumstances of her family, the elevation of it before those whom she conceived had taken such trouble to make her feel its meanness, were equal proofs of her wisdom and kindness.

The truth of the matter was, that Doctor P. had really felt himself so impressed in favour of the young invalid—so charmed with the innocence of mind and mildness of manners, which appeared to more advantage under a roof where he could not reasonably expect to find any traits of the kind, that he had recommended her in a very particular manner to Mrs. Davis, and felt himself implicated in the injurious conduct of the boarders, at the same moment that his esteem was increased, and his compassion raised for the fair sufferer, by the account Mrs. Davis gave of her sweet temper, weakness, and low spirits. He had often witnessed the selfishness of Mrs. Woudbe's disposition, and knew, that to remove the young com-

panion on the simple plea of ill-treatment, would neither interest nor affect her, except he made himself the herald of unwelcome truths, and convinced her that the affront was, as indeed was true, levelled at herself.

This, the doctor, who without affectation in any sense was a real philanthropist, resolved to do, rather than expose so amiable a creature to present or future insult. Accordingly, he called to pay Mrs. Woudbe a morning visit for that purpose, and, fortunately for Rosa, his entrance interrupted an important tête-à-tête between that lady and the Countess of Gauntlet.

The doctor, though with all possible respect for the ladies and all possible indignation against the little tatlers at Hampstead, so far from softening down the information of Mrs. Davis, rather added a few hints—which had the effect he expected. The concern of Mrs. Woudbe for the poor affronted Rosa was out of all bounds of discretion; that of Lady Gauntlet, such as accorded with the sweet sensibility of her disposition. Both ladies were unanimous in the opinion, that the poor

thing

thing should be removed that very day; and the doctor, hinting how honourable to themselves and what an *amende* to the young lady their personal protection of her would be, offered to do himself the honour of joining their party: which being accepted, they agreed Rosa should be brought from Hampstead in Lady Gauntlet's coach.

"And now I think of it," cried Mrs. Woudbe, after the doctor was gone, "what can I do with her when I attend your ladyship to the north? I can't leave her with Mr. Woudbe."

"No," replied the countess, "there might be danger in that."

"None to me, Lady Gauntlet, I assure you," answered Mrs. Woudbe, with a positive nod.

"Are you *sure*, my good friend?" and Lady Gauntlet looked more than she spoke.

Mrs. Woudbe coloured. "But what then can I do with her?"

"Could you *no way* make her useful?—should you have no little commission for her?"

Mrs. Woudbe thought of her natural brother, and hesitated.

"I know," said Lady Gauntlet, "whom it will most unmercifully plague; and therefore, as the poor thing wants air, and there will be *airs* enough at Delworth, suppose she takes the back of my travelling-coach with Lord Gauntlet; my daughters have their maids with them in the landau—your woman, mine, and my lord's valet, may go in your chaise."

Although the time was fast approaching when the necessity of caution in Mrs. Woudbe's correspondence would cease, yet, as that precise time was not yet come, and as she really did not know exactly what to do else with her companion, Lady Gauntlet's proposal was accepted; and the countess, who never lost the credit of any of her good actions, informed Rosa of the favour designed her, at the moment, of all others, when her heart was open to the warmest impressions of gratitude.

Mr. Woudbe received Rosa with more feeling than she had ever seen him evince; and

and though Portman-square was not, in point of air, *Hampstead*, it abounded in every other comfort; and the prospect before her of travelling, and even of living, with the dear good Countess of Gauntlet, gave it the essence of salubrity.

But with all the calm satisfaction with which she contemplated the approaching journey, the drag on all her happiness remained; and time, instead of blunting the edge of those reflections which harrowed her heart, added to their poignancy.

Had the amiable, the generous, the sensible Montreville, once so dear, been lost to her by death, or any common calamity, and had her last recollections of him been those which his fine qualities first inspired in her artless bosom, she might have mourned his loss, have regretted the fate that divided her from her congenial soul, and for ever lamented the inequality of their fortune; but her regret would not, as now, have been chained to just resentment, to a keen sense of injury, to insulted love, wounded pride, and injured honour, a combination so agonizing was not

easily effaced: they faltered on her tongue, faded on her cheek, and corroded in her heart; filled the page of every book she attempted to read, interrupted the course of her laudable employment, loitered in her walks, darkened her days, and haunted her nights.

The fine, easy flow of spirits which sometimes interested, but oftener amused, Mrs. Woudbe, were no more; and that lady's nerves were so exceedingly weak, any thing in the Penserosa style affected her. Rosa was therefore left to recover health, as Mrs. Woudbe said, and as Lady Gauntlet agreed was right, in her chamber, where, as she only conversed with the maid, a decent young woman, who was still permitted to attend her, it happened that she remained totally ignorant of the motives for a journey, on which the faint ^b hopes she encouraged of returning health depended.

A few days after Rosa's return to Portman-square, Madame La Croix, who waited on Mrs. Woudbe to receive some particular directions about her dresses, happening to

call

call when that lady was out, begged leave to pay her respects to Miss Walsingham, and was shewn to her chamber. Madame started back on seeing the great alteration in her countenance ; and open as Rosa's heart ever was to the appearance of kindness, it was particularly so now, when her health and spirits were equally weak. Madame actually squeezed out one tear of sympathy from the corner of her fine black eye, and Rosa's pale cheeks were deluged in return.

Madame had heard she was to be of the party to the north ; " But where," said she, " my poor child ! will you be when they return ? "

" With Mrs. Woudbe, to be sure."

Madame shook her head.

" Under the kind auspices of Lady Gauntlet."

Madame shrugged her shoulders.

" Have you heard," said she, " of a famous law-suit ? "

Rosa had once heard of such a thing from Mrs. Woudbe.

“ Do you know—” and Madame looked earnestly in her face, lowering her voice—“ that we shall lose certainly that suit.”

“ Heaven forbid !” cried Rosa, bursting into fresh tears.

“ Perhaps if you knew certain people were going, for the last time, to visit their usurped possessions, you would not be in their suite, unfit as you are to travel.”

Rosa was all astonishment. The unprecedented ingratitude every body seemed disposed to act with towards the best of women, filled her with pain and indignation: she was so agitated, that she could not speak, and was obliged to have recourse to her sal volatile.

Madame continued—“ If you would go with me to my villa, how happy I should be to assist in your recovery; and there is poor Aron Horsemagog actually dying with impatience, to tell you how you charmed him at the masquerade.”

Rosa now thought less of Lady Gauntlet, and more of herself: her imagination had dwelt but too intensely on some of the hateful events of the masquerade; but those in which

which Lord Aron had a share, were too insignificant to retain a place in her memory.

“*Me* charm at the masquerade, Madame La Croix! oh, how you are mistaken!”

“No, upon my *honour!*” replied Madame, with an air that precluded all doubt of a fact so solemnly authenticated, “Lord Aron Horsemagog feels the strongest interest in your welfare—he has suffered inexpressibly during your disorder—he is very generous, and very honourable—and, in short, if Madame dared, she could offer a thousand arguments, why Miss Walsingham should prefer removing to her villa, just a short drive from town, which she might in every respect command as her own, to the being dragged three hundred miles in the suite of a woman! such a woman! a woman whom every body——”

“Whom every body must love and respect,” said Rosa, interrupting her with vivacity, “and whom every body will also feel for, if, as you say, she will lose her cause—dear, amiable Lady Gauntlet!—No, Madame, I thank you for all your con-

sideration for me—I thank Lord Aron Horsemagog; but I can neither accept your kindness, of which I have had so many proofs, nor his, which I don't exactly understand: my health is very much impaired, but I already feel a grateful renovation; I shall at least be strong in spirits, if I am to witness so distressing a scene, as the depriving my patroness of what she considers as the birth-right of her children; I will console her who succoured me—heaven will give me powers—I shall be eloquent in such a cause. Alas! what of suffering can the human heart sustain which I have not endured? the heaviest of her afflictions—what, oh! what are they to mine! she will at least learn from me to bear."

Rosa seemed inspired;—all the blood left in her weak body mounted into her cheeks, tears streamed from her eyes, her figure was raised, and her hands clasped, as she added, "Oh, God! why must such a woman be reminded, whom thou lovest, thou chastenest!" when the door was thrown open,

Lady Gauntlet entered, and she threw herself weeping on her neck.

"This poor girl," said her ladyship, in an accent of pity to Mrs. Woudbe, who followed, "is certainly a little wrong in her head at times. Ah, La Croix! are you there? but, pray, what is the matter? you look a little mad too!"

If guilt, fear, and astonishment could give the expression of madness to the countenance, Madame might certainly look so as to justify the exclamation of the countess.

Never was Madame so much out in her politics; judging by the first of criterions, her own feeling, she expected that a hint of the downfall of her patroness would be a direct damper of the enthusiastic regard Rosa expressed for Lady Gauntlet, and that, as nobody, not even Rosa, ever professed to love or respect Mrs. Woudbe, she would gladly accept the offered villa, and the protection of her best friend, Lord Aron, in preference to depending on a falling favourite, and an old amorous coquet; and certainly the Beggar would have preferred even her original

state to the latter, had she been as well acquainted with her character as Madame La Croix; but her generous ardour baffled all Madame's schemes; and, what was worse, sent her home with such sort of intelligence, as, if she had related it truly, must have entirely destroyed all Lord Aron Horsemagog's hopes..

Madame answered Lady Gauntlet's half-earnest "Are you mad too?" with an accommodating smile;—and while Rosa bathed the hands of her patroness with the effusions of her full heart, ready to burst from her lips, she watched an opportunity to catch a glance, and put her finger on her lip, by way of enjoining secrecy; after which she retired with Mrs. Woudbe to receive her commands.

"What," said Lady Gauntlet, following the Frenchwoman, with her eyes not quite so expressive of kindness as usual, "what has she been saying to you?"

Rosa's tears streamed afresh.

"You cannot, sure, be in her power?"
Rosa's countenance clearly said—no.

"Nor in the power of any of her friends?"
"Oh,

“Oh, no!”

Lady Gauntlet looked earnestly in the still intelligent, though pale face of our heroine. “Has she then been prating of me or my affairs?—yes, I see I am right;—she fancies my sun is setting—well, we shall see;—but what has she said?”

“That you, my honoured, my dear protectress, even *you*, are not happy.”

“What, no more! and is it for such a trifles as that you wept in such agony?”

“A trifles! Ah, madam, can what afflicts you be a trifles to *me*! can you think me so ungrateful?”

“You are at least an uncommon character. But are you sure my unhappiness was the sole subject of Madame La Croix’s conversation.”

“Except some nonsense about Lord Aron Horsemagog.”

“Ah! I thought madame had her motives. Well—and so poor Lord Aron is dying for you?”

“So madame foolishly insinuated; but I did not quite so foolishly credit it.”

“No

"No, you have too much good sense—La Croix is very well in her way; but—"

Very well! did Rosa recollect right—had not the countess said she was the best creature in the world.

The countess called one of her sweetest expressions in her lovely face. "In the world, my dear Walsingham, where you are an infant, nay, where you are not yet in existence—but we are at this moment retired from that busy, dangerous, delightful world—where I have never met any thing like you, and I know you will be frightened to hear it has already given you the credit of an intrigue with this Lord Aron. I need not the evidence of that indignant glow—I know you are injured in essentials;—but pray, were you at his villa with him?"

"*His* villa! with him! I was carried to Madame's villa, in her coach; she is in habits of leaving town every week for air and exercise."

"Vastly well! and you accepted a dress from his Lordship for the masquerade night?"

"Accept

"Accept a dress! no, I bought my dress. Madame, always obliging to me, in respect to your ladyship, pressed me to accept it from her; but obligations are painful to me, particularly pecuniary ones;—besides, Mrs. Woudbe insisted on my taking a whole year's salary, and I was too rich to need a present, and too proud to accept it."

Lady Gauntlet's winning smiles, her dimples, and the laughing expression of her charming eyes, were no more. "Mifs Walsingham," said her ladyship, "you are a good, a charming young woman; your sentiments, like your person, are as free from blemish as human nature can be; retain that frank, that just and noble pride; retain it, by the only means by which it is to be retained, by persevering that guileless innocence to which I, who have moved in the first society, and who must now continue to move in it or die, look up. The world is a school of bitter experience; I am astonished how you can have been an inmate in this house, and in Madame La Croix's, without being a little initiated into its principles; you have uncommon obligations

to

to the precept, and example of those with whom you have lived; for yet, as I before said, you are scarce born—yes, even though that ingenuous look taxes me with the sorrows you have known, in contradiction of my thesis;—but what real sorrow can rive that heart which has not offended against its own purity? Ah, my good girl! if you know—but I hope (and her countenance resumed its usual sweetness of character) you will never know—”

Rosa, whose real affection for this accomplished Cicre, gave a partial interpretation to all she said, was lost in grateful admiration of the lesson, and her, who thus stooping from her high rank, condescended to instruct “a Beggar.”

“ And now,” continued her ladyship, “ I have done sermonizing, a thing rather novel to me and my sort, I will give you a history: —There was a certain rich lord, whose first passion for beauty became, by unbounded gratification, so degenerate, that, as he advanced in life, it passed from one horrid extreme to another; till, satiated with the deformities,

formities, as well as charms, of the common field of prostitution, and having injured his constitution by the excesses in which he indulged, he reformed his conduct, so far as to have wretches in pay, in different parts of the metropolis, to hunt out objects unacknowledged in his favourite pursuit. For the reception of these victims he furnished a small villa, within a few miles of London, whither they were usually carried, and where, his appetite for novelty increasing by being fed, they were seldom invited to make a second visit:—having, in one of his perambulations round town, seen a beautiful girl get out of a country stage into a hackney coach, he followed, and watched her to the house of an accommodating tradeswoman, who differed so much from his other agents, that, young and beautiful herself, as well as having an elegant house at the service of those customers who could pay well for such conveniences, her price was proportioned to her person and appearance.—I see, by your countenance, you begin to comprehend me; so it is not necessary to add, like the country sign, ‘this is a red lion:’—

bu

but it is a lesson of experience I give you, at the expence of my own penetration; for had Madame La Croix been better known to me, I should not have thought her the "best creature in the world."—The finale of the history is, that the young lady was carried to the villa of the noble lord, instead of that of her female friend; but such was the respect inspired by the purity of her heart, and delicacy of her manners, that he dared not to drop the mask; and such were the impressions she made, that he gave his agent commission to offer any terms to get the name of the fair novelty added to the list of victims: This, however, did not happen, but the next desirable thing to real possession, did; for he had the reputation of it, which he had too much vanity to disclaim, more especially as he had yet hope of turning fiction to reality; a hope not absolutely unreasonable, as, he was perswaded, she accepted from him, and appeared in public, in a muslin dress, trimmed with fine lace, which had been exhibited at his agent's house, as made by his lordship's order, to present to a new favourite."—

Rosa,

Rosa's astonishment was so great and un-
signed, at the conclusion of Lady Gauntlet's
history, that it required all her confidence in
the veracity, as well as judgment of her pa-
troness, to render the incidents possible; but
a sudden ray of light darted on her soul at
the conclusion: If indeed, such wickedness
were known to exist in broad day; if such
an insignificant as her humble self, had really
excited the attention, or curiosity of that
world her patroness was so well acquainted
with, but which it was impossible she should
comprehend; if a report so injurious to her
had been received; if it was favoured by
Lord Aron Horsemagog,—and if believed
by Montreville,—was it not at once his de-
fence and apology?

A load was at once taken from her heart;
and her eyes, from whence the animated bri-
lliancy, which were their peculiar expression,
had been totally expelled, by downcast me-
lancholy, or floods of sorrow, shone with
delight.

“ How is this? ” said her penetrating lady-
ship; “ can an injury done your character
please? can it, indeed, fail to distress you? ”

“ It

“ It has been the fate of my life, Madam,” answered Rosa with firmness, “ always to suffer by malice of others, which I never provoked, and by innocent, not wilful, error of my own ; yet, though often, as in the present instance, the calumny has itself afforded a justification, I must feel injuries, which, even to those who do not know my person, stamps depravity on my mind, and robs me of the dearest attribute of my sex ; but, dear madam, *you* know me innocent, and Mrs. Woudbe must do justice to the inoffensiveness of my life : I am the creature of your goodness ; I am her dependent ; I have no hope beyond your protection,—no ambition beyond the station I fill ; perhaps I might be more happy, if honoured with the same situation, with a lady of more cultivated mind ; but I am not less grateful to Mrs. Woudbe, because she is less happy than Lady Gauntlet, and some other ladies I have had the honour to know ;—I am sorry, not distressed, that the world mistakes my character ; but there is a person in that strange world, whose good opinion was dear to me, who

“*“I may be trifling or I may be serious, but I am serious now.”* was

was in full possession of mine, and whose changed sentiments was marked by so great a change of manners, that it transformed the perfect fine gentleman, into the rude insulter of an unprotected woman; he spoke daggers, and my heart was broken;—I regretted his lost confidence, and I more deeply regretted he had deprived himself of mine; but I saw him conversing with this lord; if he believed me guilty, he is justified; he has not wantonly insulted me; no, it was the anguish of his own feelings which outraged mine."

"Bravo," cried Lady Gauntlet; "but, my ingenuous little friend, who is this divine fellow, to whom, in the history of yourself, you forgot to give a name?"

"My reserve, believe me, madam," replied Rosa, "was neither the effect of art, nor want of confidence:—I had first indulged, and then torn myself from an attachment, I knew must be the source of misery to myself, and of humiliation to a dearer object;—yes, what I have suffered proves him too, too dear,—and I had imposed eternal silence on myself, in respect to him, and all his connections;

neditions ; but the joy of exculpating him from the crimes which tortured me, opens my heart to the most amiable and respected of friends ; yes, madam, at the moment I tell you, I never will see him more, I may confess my fatal weakness to you ;—I may tell you of him, whose honour is dear to me as my life,—though he may give the name of Montreville to another.”

Lady Gauntlet half screamed ;—she started off her chair ; the surprize put her off all guard :—“ Montreville !” she exclaimed ; “ Montreville ! what Montreville do you mean ?”

Rosa knew not the family name of her amiable friend was Montreville ; and the last thing she would have suspected was, that the man of her choice was precisely him whom she hoped would be proved an impostor ; in short, the very being whose claims, if maintainable, would deprive her patroness of her honours and estate ; she simply answered, “ The grandson of Admiral Herbert, of the Grange, in Yorkshire.”

Lady Gauntlet’s first alarm was, least the delectable Major, her own son,

“ Whose air cries arm!—whose every look’s an oath.” without having ever seen warmer service than that of inland marches, and mounting guard at St. James’s, was the Adonis, about whose honour the Beggar was so anxious. She was no sooner at ease, in this important point, than she actually burst into an immoderate fit of laughter; which, as it made light of so serious a subject, visibly embarrassed our heroine.

“ And so,” cried the countess, at length having composed her muscles into her usual gentle smile, “ Montreville is the phoenix of your idolatry; and his honour is dearer to you than your life;—oh, upon my word, after that, you will be spared the declaration you have lately been fond of making, ‘ that life is of no value;’—do not throw such anxious incredulity into your pretty face; you will find the thing exactly as I say, and when we get into the country, I shall, perhaps, cure you of your passion; but pray do you know his Portuguese mother?”

Rosa knew not she was a Portuguese, nor that she existed, till she learned it from the rejoicings at Pontefract.

“ Oh,

“ Oh, no doubt the fatted calf was killed,” her ladyship said, scornfully ; but she advised Rosa by no means to make Mrs. Woudbe a confidante of her passion ; for, and again she laughed out, she might tell her natural brother ; “ and yes,” she added, “ you may be surprised, but take it on my word, my dear little friend, that may inconvenience your honourable idol.”

“ I have no idol, madam,” said Rosa, hurt at a certain satirical glance, that all Lady Gauntlet’s sweetness did not effectually conceal ; “ I have confessed my weakness to you, and—” a tear stole down her cheek.

“ And,—” said her ladyship, kissing the pearly drop off, “ you really shall not have cause to regret it ;—I think I love you at this moment, though you are so beautiful, and that is more than I ever promised ; and I give you a paradox to study, as a reason, why the greatest vexation of my life, and the greatest disappointment of yours, proceed from one and the same object ; and what will further amaze you, I am very much deceived if our good friend Mrs. Woudbe does not suffer

still more than either of us by the same famous being ;—'tis really droll that three women, whose fates have such very different aspects, should be united in one mystery, and suffering under the same planet ; but time, child, time will develope every thing :—call on me, the first leisure morning at Delworth, for the clue of this maze, and, in the mean time, whatever you hear of my law-suit, do not, by fretting, retard the return of your beauty : I am a disciple of Lavater, and see that dignity of brow, which I at first thought native, prognosticates *acquired*, not *born*, greatness ;—yes, I see the downfall of one beauty, and the elevation of another in that little corner of your eye ;—but where, or when, did you see the seducing Montreville last ?”

“ At the masquerade,” answered the blushing Rosa, confused, she knew not why, at the raillery of the countess.

“ At the masquerade ! well, I know he was there, but thought him fully engaged ; pray was it then he offered the insult you are so ready to excuse, and so good as to forgive ?”

Again Rosa blushed, and scarce whispered “ yes.”

“ At what hour ?”

“ After Mrs. Woudbe unmasked.”

“ Great !” cried her ladyship ; “ this Montrreville, I am curious to know him ; he has talents for a statesman ! quite a man of business !—Well, my dear, Mrs. Woudbe has, I dare say, by this time, dismissed La Croix, and I have a thousand things myself to arrange ; so, after passing so long with you, without saying a syllable on the subject, which brought me here, I have but a moment to tell you, I have ordered you some white sarsenet, some lace, feathers, and muslin, which I desire you will, as I know you are very clever, make by some of Mrs. Woudbe’s fine things ; and now I read your advancement in your looks, I shall send you some more ; you will, besides having air and exercise, see some company at Delworth, and it will gratify me, though not them, to see you admired ; and, who knows whether some odd destiny or other may not carry the Portuguese and her phoenix thither.—Adieu ;—come, don’t devour my hand ; you will not always be so fond of kissing it.”

“ Then

“ Then I shall not be fond of any thing; then I shall no longer feel, no longer think, no longer exist.”

“ Well, *we shall see*; in the mean time be well, and recollect, you have a journey of three hundred miles to take, which commences in two days.”

“Sint u le Lady en van Harf I niet?
Wilt u tegel on dat moge on Harf I niet
en niet misch on dat u niet wiet
soekend in even doot wachten dat u niet
-dien niet u niet wacht.”

C H A P. IV.

“ The good must merit God’s peculiar care ;
“ But who, but God, can tell us who they are ? ”

AS no lady of moderate understanding, could be a greater admirer of fashionable manners, or more desirous to emulate them, than Mrs. Woudbe, Lady Gauntlet’s rather profuse presents to Rosā, in consequence of her skill in physiognomy, was followed by many from her. Mrs. Woudbe was guilty of a thousand daily meannesses, in the midst of her profusion ; but if it was an attribute of nobility to be generous, she would be so in spite of nature ; and Rosa’s pride not revolting against acts of generosity, so becoming in her patroness to offer, and proper for her to accept,

cept, her wardrobe, both useful and ornamental, was of course replenished ; and Mrs. Woudbe took especial care to inform her, that, though not just now on a level with the countess, in point of rank, she was infinitely superior to her in riches ; which, indeed, was too true ; for, it is a melancholy fact, in these hard and perilous times, that the nobility of the kingdom are the poorest people in it ; and how, indeed, can it fail to be so ? how can a nobleman of ten, twenty, thirty, or forty thousand pounds a-year, keep even with his tradesmen, when there are so many elegant, unnecessary expences, which take up all the ready money ; and when he has in his establishment, men who, like the worthy progenitor of Mr. Woudbe, have an eye to driving their own set of bright bays.

Earl Gauntlet had some eighteen or twenty thousand pounds a-year, a place at court, a *sinecure* on the revenue, and a commission in the army ; his elder hope was a member of parliament, in the interest of the minister, and had, besides, a place of no inconsiderable profit in one of the home departments ; his se-

cond son was a young officer, of old rank, in the guards ; and his countess had,—no human being, save her beautiful self, can estimate her income ; all little folks knew of the matter was, that it must be very great, and that she was both able and willing to spend it ; so that Earl Gauntlet was really a distressed man.

Rosa, however, was rich ; so rich, that having paid the trifle Mrs. La Croix took for her fine dress, out of the remains of her own money, she had now no occasion to change the fifty pounds Mrs. Woudbe advanced ; but the case of her circumstances, in regard to pecuniary matters, had not the magical effect on Rosa's mind, which some people fancy is the concomitant of a full purse.

What would not Rosa now have given to hear of John Brown, and how severely did she regret the politic regard to appearance which prevented her from giving him her address, or receiving his ; and after eight months, in which he had made no enquiry after her, it was not now to be expected.

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The duty she owed to the children of Major Buanun, urged her to write to Dr. Cameron, to inform him of John's knowledge of the affairs of their deceased relation; and she was also often tempted to write to that gentleman on her own account; but, after all, what possible benefit could result to the major's children, or what pleasure to himself, from such vague information as she could give them; she understood so little of the public funds, that she had never recollect ed even the names mentioned by John; so that except he had written, as she sometimes hoped, on failing to find her, or gone himself to Scotland, and made them acquainted with the good fortune himself, all she could say on the subject would but raise expectation, without power to realize it; still, therefore, in hope that some happy chance might again restore the faithful humble friend she had so unfortunately missed, she resolved to defer writing to Scotland; but there was a duty which, though less impelled to by inclination, she could not answer to herself to neglect.

It was now near nine months since she parted with her mother; Mr. Garnet had given her his address, and though the affluence of his circumstances as well as the affection he evinced for his wife, were sufficient sureties for her worldly comforts, yet it was incumbent on her to inform herself of the health and happiness of her only parent, before she commenced a journey, which, besides possible accidents to herself, might, considering her mother's time of life, infirmities, and unfortunate propensity, render a future meeting uncertain: under the influence of these reflections having, with the assistance of the servant, arranged and packed her clothes in a travelling trunk belonging to Mrs. Woudbe's carriage, the day before that fixed for their departure, and obtained Mrs. Woudbe's permission to be absent a few hours, she sent for a hack, and after passing through, what appeared to her a new world, in comparison with the regions of St. James's, and Portman-square, the coach stopped, according to her direction, at a very pretty house, in Paradise-street,

street Rotherhithe, with the name of Garnet, on a brass plate on the door.

Rosa felt an emotion of pleasure very naturally accounted for,—the habitation of the mother was no disgrace to the child;—this was an observation, on which her mind might rest, without the censure of local pride; it was comfortable to her parent, and that rendered it so to herself.

A decent woman opened the door, and, with an expression of pleasure in her plain countenance, invited Rosa in, and, without asking a single question, or answering one put to her, shewed her into a neat parlour, where, as Mr. Garnet said, she might see herself in the furniture and painted floor-cloth, and where, the busy servant, having placed her a chair, her question, if Mr. or Mrs. Garnet were at home? was answered by another,—if she was the pretty young lady as was so good to mistus when her leg was broked? because, if she was, mastur and mistus left order, she should have the whole house, as good a one it wur as any in Paradise-street, and the garden as nice as hands

could make it, all as if it wur her own, and live in it till they comed back again.

Rosa was affected at the declared kindness, which provided her with so comfortable an asylum, and felt a latent self-reproach for her want of affection for so considerate a mother, which kept her a moment silent, before she could enquire, if they had been in town since Mrs. Garnet's accident?

" Oh, bleſſ your soul! Miss," answered the woman, " that they have, and mistus picked up purely; and, to be ſure, there was ſitch a fuſſ about making rice puddings every Sunday, ay, and often a worky-days too, and all eſpecting of you;—then mastur ſaid, he thofht as ſomeat ad appened to you, and mistus cried and took on; but I thofht as ſhe groed pure and stout again; but howſiver I was out, for ſhe groed ſick, poor ſole, and mallancholly, and fell off on her meals; and mastur and ſhe went to ſome doctor's out of town, and after that, why ſhe wuſnt a morsel better, and then off they ſet agen to the ſame doctor's; for my share I would not give a pin for country doctors; and then ſummur comed,

comed, and our gardin comed out purely ; 'tis a monstrous pretty gardin, Miss,—here, you may see it purely out of this winder,—I am up yearly and late at it myself ; only had two days work done by a gardener, all the summur ;—howsiver mistus pined to a skillet ; so mastur said as he would go once more to that country doctor, a poor chip-in-porridge thing, I dare for to say ; howsiver go thay did ; and then mastur said, as he would take mistress a jaunting into the country to divert her, for, poor sole, she looked like a ghost ; and then, Miss, there comed a fine gentleman, as mistus said was your sweet-heart, and axed all about you."

" About me !"

" As sure as you are alive, Miss."

" When was this ?"

" Oh Lord ! many's the time and oft ; and then he sent letters, some on em cost a matter of sevenpence, but mastur said as he wus welcome as flowers in May ; I do believe here is one on em a top on the glass."

The woman having reached the letter ; if Rosa's declining to read it, was not a triumph

of temper, it was a triumph of equal merit; for the hand and seal were unquestionably Montreville's, and her pride, if not her love, was gratified, at finding he had sacrificed his dislike of the Garnets, to the desire of finding her.

The possibility that, by this channel, she might, on some future time, have it in her power to clear the imputations, which a combination of chance and wickedness had cast on her character, and overwhelm him with regret for his credulity, gave a glow of pleasure to her countenance, as she rejected the offered letter, and rising, asked, if she could have Mr. Garnet's address.

"Nothen," the woman said, "could be more out of luck, for thof only yesterday she had a letter from mistus, concarning bottlen the ale, Mr. Tod, the Meerykan marchant, wanted to write to mastur, from his country ouse, a-top of Blackheath, and not knowing better, she guv it to him; but in two or three days it might be had agen."

Rosa the more seriously regretted this circumstance, as her leaving town would preclude

clude a possibility of receiving it there, and she was as totally ignorant of the route Lady Gauntlet intended to take, as where her seat lay; all she had heard was, that it was in the north;—she therefore desired to be kindly remembered to Mr. and Mrs. Garnet, and then recollecting the child, asked if he accompanied them?

“ Oh, bless your sole, Miss! no,—maſtur said, as he wud be ruined, so left him at boarding school hard-by.”

Rosa took the address of the school; and though the woman earnestly begged her to consider how maſtur and miſtus wud fret, because she wud not make the best house in Paradise-street, and the nicest gardin in the world her own, an offer that would not come every sunshiny day, and concluded her remonstrance, shrewdly nodding, with “folks might go furder and fare wus,” she ordered the hack to the boarding school, and being instantly recognized by little Phill, discharged part of her debt of gratitude for the affectionate kindness of the father, by caresses and presents to the child, after which she returned

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to Portman-square, better both in look and spirits, and certainly not less happy, for her short excursion.

Mrs. Woudbe, in high good humour, rallied her on her Rotherhithe acquaintance; supposed they were Cyclops, and that, from their residence at such an out-of-the-way place, their heads came in contact with the feet of christians at the west end of the town.

Mr. Woudbe, not quite so full of wit and jest, said, many a man who could buy half the west end of the town, lived about Rotherhithe.

Rosa smiled;—some humble friends dropped in; Mrs. Woudbe, who, with all her predilection for high rank, was little less delighted to be queen of the company where she might top the great personage, had no small number of humble friends; and those who now came to take their leave of her, had so happy a knack at laughing, in the proper periods of her conversation, admiring all she said, and praising all she did, that Rosa, finding she might steal off unobserved, retired, if not to rest, to dwell on

subjects as exhilarating,—and was up in the morning, ready dressed for the journey, in a pretty habit made by Lady Gauntlet's tradesman exactly like her own, with the Windsor uniform, three hours before Mrs. Woudbe was stirring, who, indeed, was not half dressed when the Earl's coach stopped at the door.

The countess did not alight, but the earl always and on every occasion a complete courtier, got out to un-glove to Mr. Woudbe, and hand Mrs. Woudbe into the carriage.

The Montrevilles were remarkable for a certain character of countenance, which assimilated in all the family portraits, and were equally striking in the living branches of the family; the picture, which so struck Rosa in Lady Gauntlet's room, of the late earl, might almost have passed for the present earl, or his brother, though the latter was much inferior to the former in personal advantages; but still the resemblance was striking, and Rosa, who had never seen him before, viewed him with such riveted attention, that she forgot, till reminded by Mr. Woudbe, that he waited

with

with uncovered head, extended hand, and body inclining to the bend, to offer the same service to her. Too much confused to apologize, she hastily entered the carriage; and, blushing no less at her absence of thought, than at the secret motive which occasioned it, shrunk, with averted eyes, into the corner of the coach.

Lady Gauntlet, ever attentive to etiquette, bowed very graciously, and announced Miss Walsingham to her lord;—his lordship lost nothing by the concealment, under the fringed curtains of Rosa's fine downcast eyes: Ladies' eyes, except royal ones, were no part of his lordship's admiration, still less of his study; he bowed in a most civil manner, and the carriage dash'd off.

The journey began and ended, as most long journeys do; after a few brilliant sallies from Mrs. Wouldbe, and as many sweet smiles from the countess, the former became dull, the latter thoughtful; Lord Gauntlet fell asleep, and Rosa had her book; this lasted till the first change of horses at Barnet; when the dusty road, and the heat of the weather

weather, furnished conversation for the next half dozen miles, when the air had so good an effect, that the dinner formed a fresh topic of general interest.

At St. Alban's they overtook the younger branches of the family, to whom Lady Gauntlet introduced Mrs. Woudbe and her young companion.

Lady Louisa, the earl's eldest daughter, had, as was mentioned in the second volume, made an early and imprudent marriage with a gentleman, who, however charmed with her beauty, certainly did carry her young ladyship off to Scotland in pursuit of the nearest road to church preferment, for Mr. Brudenel was an ordained, unbeficed clergyman.

Lady Gauntlet, who was very partial to this daughter, forgave an offence she was wise enough to acknowledge, proceeded from a mistake of her own; for relying on the power of that beauty which she had proved in herself so irresistible, she presented her daughter at court, with the serious intention of marrying

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ing her to the richest Duke in England before she was fifteen.

Marriage was not, however, in that Duke's way; and though Lady Louisa was seen every where, admired, toasted, and talked of, Mr. Brudenel happened to be the first man who said any very soft things to her, and with such effect, he easily persuaded her to accompany him to Gretna Green.

His expectations were not entirely disappointed. Lady Gauntlet could command those who commanded every thing but money; Mr. Brudenel was therefore inducted into two very valuable livings; but as he was obliged to begin life on credit, and, of course, pay twice over for what he did *not*, as well as what he really did want, the Rev. Mr. Brudenel, and his wife Lady Louisa, were very shabby appendages to the family of the lovely Countess, their honoured mother; and they afforded at the same time a very interesting study for the younger daughters, and a hint to herself for her own future conduct towards them.

When

When the education of the ladies was complete, that is to say, when a Swiss governess, perfectly adequate to the task of instruction, had done with them, Lady Gauntlet, conscious perhaps, that too close an intimacy with her daughters might not exactly correspond with her wish to preserve their minds untainted by, and even in ignorance of, the innocent transactions of her own busy life, engaged Madame Rosette, a ci-devant baroness of high birth, unimpeached character, and admired accomplishments, partly as companion, and partly as governess to her grown daughters.

Madame Rosette's family, were among the first who deserted their post at Versailles, at the beginning of the disturbance there, when emigration was rather the run of fashion than an act of necessity, and when the flying nobles expected to return in triumph; and so ill provided was the Baron Rosette for the events which followed, and for ever deprived him of his honour and fortune, that Madame was very soon in a situation to be thankful to the foundress of St. Cyr for an education
that

that gave her bread, while her husband died of a broken heart among the dejected heroes in the army of Condé.

Madame Rosette was as virtuous as she was noble and accomplished; but the happiness she might have experienced in a family where she was treated with infinite respect, in the society of amiable young women who loved her, was embittered by open repinings after the rank and fortune she had lost,—and every other sentiment jaundiced by an inveterate hatred of plebeians—a feeling, perhaps, not unnatural in a heart bleeding from every vein over the excesses committed by monsters who were once the object of her contempt; and she was not more tenacious of the honour and virtue of the young ladies under her care, than of that innate superiority of rank which she insisted could only be preserved by keeping inferiors at an awful distance—a lesson to which, not only the miseries Madame Rosette deplored, but the discontented poverty of their own sister, pining incessantly for the splendor she had lost, gave both weight and authority.

Mrs.

Mrs. Woudbe's face, Madame declared, reminded her of the poissardes who made up the dreadful cavalcade from Paris to Versailles, which drove her from France; there was not a trait in her countenance which was not eminently vulgar, and her demeanour was so perfectly bourgeois, that it was with infinite pain she bore to sit in her company. Could, then, the humble companion of a woman, so obnoxious and contemptible, be honoured with the notice of Madame Rosette or her fair pupils? No—the thing was impossible;—and though the young ladies immediately discovered an interesting candour in Rosa's countenance—and though Madame acknowledged, that, if her situation and connections did not prove the direct contrary, she would, from the air of gentility in every feature of her fine face, and every movement of her graceful person, have been ready to give her credit for as good blood as flowed in the veins of her pupils, or even her own; yet the bar between their rank and hers was insurmountable, and her respectful compliments were

were returned with civilities no less cold than formal.

Rosa had been too long inured to the supercilious notice of little minds to be mortified at slights, evidently levelled at her circumstances; but she could not help feeling the hardship of being in the same party, going to the same place, and living under the same roof with young women of her own age, in whose open looks she read candour and good-humour, without hope of being admitted to their little parties; and she sat down by Mrs. Woudbe, visibly disconcerted. The major, or, as he was called by his mother, Lord Charles, was cursed hungry; but he must, nevertheless, see how his dogs fared before he would eat himself;—but Lord Delworth instantly recollected the incident at Mushroom-Place, and the face, which was indeed formed to make a lasting impression where it was once seen with interest. Nothing was less likely to be remembered by the earl than a fine set of features; the major was at that time too much in wine to remember any thing; the young ladies had merely followed

lowed their mother into the eating-parlour; and as nothing could, in their opinion, be more disagreeably insipid than the two pretty daughters of Sir Solotmon Mushroom, they had confined their attention to a small talk between themselves, without having their curiosity excited by the distress of the Countess of Lowder, and still less, by the insignificant being who was the innocent cause of it; so it was only by Lord Delworth Rosa was recognised.

This young man, whose natural respect for his mother was not certainly the less for observing the adroitness and success with which she managed the interest of her family, and preserved that superiority of beauty and attraction above all her compeers, which was the best earnest of her continued power, did not think it proper to dis-arrange any plan she might have formed by the discovery he had made; and if the fine creature had come into the family by accident, opportunities enough would occur at Delworth for improving recollection into intimacy.

Lord

Lord Delworth was a young man, famous for no active virtues, nor accused of any very uncommon vices: it could not happen that a law-suit, in which he was so immediately interested, and which was of such importance to his family, could be a secret to him; but such was his experience of the management of his mother, and such his confidence in the ease and cheerfulness of her demeanour, that he did not burthen the happy equanimity of his temper with anticipation of apprehended evil; when he was so near the possession of certain good; for, was he not to be married to a fine girl with eighty thousand pounds! was he not to touch near half of that sum himself! and if the heart of his bride was set on a coronet she would never wear, if her settlements were making on an estate she would not enjoy, would her disappointments unmarry her? or recall that part of her fortune which he had destined to be scattered half over London? Certainly not.

Before the author concludes this digression, she begs leave to hint to those ignorant people, who are of opinion that, at least in the momentous

mentous affairs of his estate and family, Lord Gauntlet's name should sometimes be mentioned;—such a husband as his lordship is on no occasion otherwise necessary to the arrangement of such wives as her ladyship, than to stand forth her champion in any dirty business in which her character or interest may be involved; in which case, he will be handed down to posterity, with all the distinction he deserves.

The first repast being ended, the family and *suite*, consisting of the Earl and Countess, with Mrs. Woudbe and Rosa, in the post-coach—the young ladies, Madame Rosette, and a female domestic in the landau—the Countess and Mrs. Woudbe's woman, with Lord Gauntlet's valet, in Mrs. Woudbe's chaise—Lord Delworth and the major in the former's chaise—their two valets and the major's dogs in Lord Gauntlet's chaise—two other female servants and a man-cook in a hack-chaise—and a suitable number of out-riders—proceeded on their journey; and as the Countess never lost a moment of time, got into the inn, where they slept, so late, that, after

a very slight repast, every body were glad to retire.

And thus, with very little variation, except what fine roads and beautiful prospects afforded, the long journey was accomplished; which gave *Rosa* leisure to compare her first excursion to the north in a humble hack-chaise, with a man of honour, sense, and urbanity, without a single attendant, or the cavalcade which, though it attracts all the eyes, bows, courtesies, tumbling beggars, and barking curs of every village from London to Cumberland, left on her mind a decided preference of comfort to show.

The first glance of *Delworth House*, however, compensated for the insipidity of the companions of her journey; for, impossible as it may seem, even the Countess either was or affected to sleep half the way.

It was evening when they passed the porter's lodge. The rays of the departing sun set in a fine clouded sky over lustre-brown turrets, which rose in majestic grandeur on the brow of an eminence, at the foot of another eminence considerably higher, clothed with trees,

trees, whose waving foliage exhibited the countless shades of that universal tint with which nature decks her favourite scenes.

The road, which was circular, led by separate ascents through fine plantations of noble trees to a flat in front of the magnificent building; in the centre of which was a large sheet of water; on its clear bosom a highly-ornamented vessel, with streamers waving in the wind, rode at anchor, from which a band of such rural music as the neighbouring village afforded, with two French-horns and a flute from among the earl's domestics, greeted the arrival of their lord; the revibrating strains of the music, simple as they were; the extensive view on all sides many miles over the adjacent, luxuriant, well-cultivated country; the profusion of fine flowers, and flowering shrubs, in high scent and in bloom; the Gothic splendor of the fine house they were approaching, which, though it spoke the taste of other days, was in the highest order and neatness, struck Rosa with such enthusiastic admiration, that she exclaimed, seizing the hand of the Countess, and pressing

it fervently to her lips, “ This is surely a repose for the happy favourites of heaven.”

The earl gave the first symptom of feeling he had betrayed for five long days, in a deep sigh, and Lady Gauntlet looked grave; but Mrs. Woudbe protested, if Mr. Woudbe could move the Dorsetshire house to such a spot as that before her, she really believed she could live in it three months at a time!

The earl again sighed as the carriage stopped. The domestics lined the spacious hall, through which Lady Gauntlet led the way into a drawing-room, with Gothic bow windows, from which it appeared as impossible to limit, as to satiate the eye,—such was the enchanting beauty of the view it commanded.

“ Heaven!” exclaimed Mrs. Woudbe, “ what a grand old building stands on the level of that fine park! I declare it would make a charming frontispiece for the Grim Abbess, or Dumb Nun of St. Bog-and-moat.”

“ And the scenery!” said Rosa, with vivacity—“ what infinitely finer flights might fancy take from what you now see, madam, than

than any you could glean from rambling round your seat in Dorsetshire; and how much more venerable and solemn are the woods near this charming place than those you were so attached to there."

"As to that, Miss Walsingham," answered Mrs. Woudbe, "I have altered my plan since I studied the horrors of my husband's woods in Dorsetshire; and if I had not made up my mind to description of beauties and horrors, which eye never saw, nor ears ever heard, merely because none of those horrid low creatures who write for bread shall presume to say I copy them, I must own that this place exceeds any thing I ever saw; and if a good thunder-storm would but flash through the trees, and tear up a few of them by the root; and if, as I said before, I was not resolved never to set my name to any thing natural—Pray, Lady Gauntlet, is that the sea yonder which I took for a white cloud?"

"An arm of it," replied the Countess, "which washes the base of the rocks you see beyond the castle."

Coffee, tea, ices, lemonade, and fruits, were served; after which the earl retired to his library, his elder son to the stables, the younger to the kennel, and the ladies to their apartment with Madame Rosette.

"Well, Lady Gauntlet," cried Mrs. Woudbe, looking through her eye-glass out of the window, "this is really an heavenly place."

"I give *you* joy of heaven then," answered the lady, with an expression of countenance Rosa could not understand.

"Thank ye, dear Countess," said Mrs. Woudbe, half courtesying, with the same mysterious expression. "But pray tell me what fine old castle that is?"

"Denningcourt — Lord Denningcourt's present residence. The elegant, expensive, still handsome Lord Denningcourt, they say, resides in a corner of that old building, bare as it was left by the late lord of even necessities."

"As great a brute as his son," interrupted Mrs. Woudbe—"I hated the one, and despise the other."

"He

"He certainly always had an odd habit of overlooking; — but (and the Countess smiled at Rosa) you see how he is punished. That fine seat, which overlooks him, on the rise at the further extremity of the park, is the jointure-house, new built from the foundation, furnished, and ornamented at an immense expence by the angry papa of the present earl for his widow; and the best of the business is, she is, after all, but tenant for life; for the jointure-house must go to the next dowager, whoever she may be, and the whole of the estate is bound to the repairs of the deserted castle. See how, like a proud minion, yon new house seems to soar above the deserted favourite. All that was worth removing, the actual heir looms excepted, have been carried to the jointure house, where, at her husband's last request, the dowager principally resides."

"Well," answered Mrs. Woudbe, "it must be vastly pleasant to have such fashionable neighbours—you visit, to be sure?"

"No—we do not. Lady Denning-court—"

“ Is the strangest woman in the world, and the rudest too.”

“ I am not to be told that.”

“ So I can’t wonder your ladyship does not let her in. I assure you I shall exactly follow—that is, I never design to visit her. Only think how insolent she treated me after I sent the tickets to her niece—a vulgar thing! with her Scotch brogue—never opened her doors to me; but if ever I give another masquerade—”

“ You will manage better,” said the Countess, with a dimpled smile.

“ And pray what town is that beyond?” asked Mrs. Woudbe.

“ ’Tis only a village—Denningcourt. The buildings you see, which gives it so important an appearance, are an alms-house for poor women, an hospital for the village invalids, a charity school, and an infant nursery.”

“ And pray, my dear madam,” cried Rosa, with energy, “ who was so good as to think of all those things?”

“ One

“One whom, though I do not love, I respect, Miss Walsingham,—it is the Countess of Denningcourt.”

“Ah, madam! did she not well merit that her own dome should rise superior to the old castle?”

“She is, I tell you,” said Mrs. Woudbe, “the most ridiculous creature in the world. Very handsome, no doubt; but so quizish and proud! and so stately!”

“She was,” the countess coolly said, “daughter and sister to a duke.”

This silenced Mrs. Woudbe about Lady Denningcourt; for who respected dukes and duke’s relations more than her.

“And pray what place is that,” she asked, “on the left?”

That, Lady Gauntlet coldly said, was Delworth: Lord Gauntlet and herself were little in the country; their duty and inclination detained them elsewhere; where, if they did not build charity-houses, she hoped they were at their post.

As there were no other very near neighbours fashionable enough to interest Mrs. Woudbe, and as the several villages in sight, from the eminence on which they stood, were merely clusters of houses with a steeple, Mrs. Woudbe had already seen enough of the charming prospect, when the supper-bell rung. The meal was elegant, and well served; Lady Gauntlet all herself; Mrs. Woudbe, who was much devoted to the gratifications of the table, paid it due respect; Lord Gauntlet was thoughtful; Lord Delworth chatty; the major, or Lord Charles, noisy; the young ladies reserved; Madame Rosette silent; and Rosa, as she was still blessed with the particular notice of her patroness, pleased with every thing.

The next day, that most delightful visitor which can be received at a country seat, the post, arrived: it brought letters for every part of the family, Mrs. Woudbe and her humble companion excepted. "Blessed are they who expect nothing :" By that rule Rosa was

was much the happier of the two, for she could not be disappointed; now Mrs. Woudbe was, and retired, in very ill humour, to write to her natural brother.

Delworth House abounded in all sorts of magnificence: the beds were down; the carpets pourtrayed all the beauty of colour; the furniture was grand; the mirrors such, and so judiciously disposed, as to reflect every beauty of situation as well as person; the side-boards were richly and tastefully decorated; the table served with a profusion of delicacies, and the servants numerous and attentive; no form was observed, but every body left to the amusements of their own fancy; books, music, and instruments; tables stored with implements for drawing; saddle horses and carriages, were at their command; in short, there was nothing to wish for, but that placid content in the host, which is the most flattering earnest of welcome to the guest—and this there was not.

If, instead of leaving his affairs to a steward and signing his accounts without examining a

single voucher, Lord Gauntlet had paid as much attention to pounds, shillings, and pence, as his friend Sir Solomon Mushroom; he could not have been more constantly fixed to the secretary in his library.

The countess was also just now vastly taken up: she had not only to display her fine taste in the ornamental preparations for her son's wedding, but almost daily expresses to read and to answer—for Lady Gauntlet's correspondence was too sacred to be carried on in the common way.

Mrs. Woudbe was miserable, for the wicked natural brother was still a defaulter in letter writing;—her husband, indeed, was tolerably attentive, and her daughter sometimes wrote to her; but so inadequate were those proofs of attention from them to sooth the raging tempest in her bosom, that all Rosa's efforts to amuse or console her were to no effect; vainly she reminded her of her resolution to go on with the Grim Abbess, or Dumb Nun of St. Bog-and-moat: Mrs. Woudbe's occupation, as far as respected writing

writing, was over, or rather not begun; altho' if her own feelings had been at that moment committed to paper, her reality would have outdone the best horror-monger of the age.

Lord Delworth, notwithstanding his approaching nuptials, chose to level a few sighs and tender glances at Rosa: the major too, having nothing else to amuse him, diverted his sisters with the history of his sufferings,—being, he declared, cursedly in love with that strange girl, Miss Walsingham; so that, had not the winning affability of Rosa's manners, her accomplishments, and fine understanding triumphed over the meanness of her birth and situation, which even her beloved patroness did not conceal, she must have been as nervous as the most fashionable and insipid patient on Dr. Farquhar's list: but as Delworth really had all those delightful resources which Lady Gauntlet described to be found at Mr. Woudbe's; as besides she was at liberty to take her morning and evening rambles in the pleasant woods and fields; and, as above all, she had

just now proof of the continued regard of her patroness, in a message from that lady by her woman, requesting her to be in her dressing-room at eight the next morning, this chapter leaves our heroine as happy as any heroine ought to be, when there remains a long volume and a half of her history to be written.

C H A P. V.

“ Amid the roses fierce Repentance rears
“ Her snaky crest.”

IF, according to Lord Shaftsbury, the most natural beauty in the world be honesty and moral truth, Rosa must have had great advantages over Lady Gauntlet, when overjoyed to obey her summons to the first *tete-a-tete* she had been honoured with at Delworth, and dressed with an exactitude of elegance, more in compliment to her patroness, than to gratify female vanity, she appeared before her in a small dressing room, commanding a still more charming view than the drawing-room below it.

The countess was sitting by the window, her head pensively resting on her white hand;

and

and though her fine face was overspread by a thoughtful cast, received Rosa very graciously; and as it was hardly possible to behold the charming and variegated scene before them, without admiration, even though it were a common object, asked her opinion of the country, and the few people she had seen; questioned her of the rambles she took, the walks she preferred, and at length, "it has happened, Miss Walsingham," said she, "that having expressly brought you into the country for air and exercise, I have kept you to the letter of my invitation; air you cannot help having, and I am glad to hear you have taken exercise, but as to company,—come, own the truth, have you not thought us very dull?—Mrs. Woudbe, poor Mrs. Woudbe! I hope she will forgive me, but her trouble is amusing: She, I find, shuts herself up in all the high spirit of tragedy, and you cannot offer a syllable she will accept in mitigation of her despair. Well, as I expect she must be worse before she can be better, we say nothing of her;—but my daughters, how shall we excuse the reserve they have shewn

to

to so good a young person ? I am afraid there is a little envy at bottom."

" Envy !" exclaimed Rosa, " dear madam, what have I done to merit so severe a reproof ? Envy me ! Your daughters, so good, so lovely, so amiable and so happy, envy a poor outcast like me ! Ah madam, I see I have lost your esteem."

" Nay, Miss Wilsingham, you wrong me and yourself ; but how will you account for the reserve I alluded to."

" Account for it ! there can be no difficulty in that ; can you imagine, madam, that, elated as I certainly am by your goodness, and the condescension of your conduct to a creature who owes you every thing, I forget how small my own claims to such distinction are ? or that I

" Reach at stars because they shine on me ;"

and am so giddy with the happiness, as not to be sensible of the importance of subordination, in all ranks of society ? could I presume to lessen the distance Providence has placed between nobility and beggary ? and could I, in particular

particular, forget the respect due from the child of charity to the daughters of Lord Gauntlet, of my benefactress ? Indeed, madam, you know not how you wound me."

Lady Gauntlet paused.—“Really my dear,” said she, “I can only say, those who do not envy, must, I think, love you ;—and my sons, what do you say of them—they behave better ?”

Rosa coloured rather too haughtily for a beggar ; but Lady Gauntlet made the *amende honorable*.

“Miss Walsingham,” said she, taking her hand, “I have devoted an hour this morning to chat with you.—Let me ask, do you not know my family name ?”

Strange as it may appear, Rosa did not.—She had never happened to hear them called Montreville, and really concluded the family name was Gauntlet.

“It is odd enough,” said her ladyship, “you should live with us so long, and not know we bear the name of Montreville.”

Rosa’s astonishment is not to be expressed ; “Montreville !” she repeated, hardly daring to respire—“Montreville !”

“Even

“ Even so.—You are surprised ; but what will you be, when I tell you we are related, nearly related to the Montreville you love ;—nay, it is him who is our adversary in the law-suit, of which you have heard—him who deprives us of our title and estate.”

If any thing could add to the amazement of Rosa at this moment, it was the easy and collected manner Lady Gauntlet spoke of an event so important and distressing ; but such was the exalted opinion she cherished of the wisdom and rectitude of her mind, which alone she thought could inspire fortitude on so trying an occasion, that it raised her still nearer the perfection which converts mere mortals into angels !—but Montreville ! the cruel Montreville ! ah, if he knew the woman he so distressed ! whose children he deprived of the inheritance, to which they, at least thought, they were rightful heirs.

“ I see,” continued the countess, “ the share you take in my concerns ; but I have a volume to say to you, and we shall not be long alone : If you consider Mr. Montreville,—I might, indeed, call him Lord Gauntlet, since

a few days will declare him such ; but if you consider him as *my* enemy, it will prepare you for an elucidation of his character you cannot suspect. I speak to you at present in confidence : Lord Gauntlet and I resign a title we should never have possessed, had we known of this young man's existence ; if you ever converse with him on the subject, have the goodness to tell him so."

Rosa converse with him ! with Lord Gauntlet ! she who had been so anxious to escape from explanations with respect to herself, when he was simple Mr. —— ; no, that was impossible.

" 'Tis unlikely," said the countess, " not impossible. My daughters are amiable, their accomplishments are more shewy, but more superficial than yours ;—their eldest sister married so preposterously, when she might have chosen among the first, that I will never risk the same misfortune by the same error, which was bringing her too early forward ; they are equally ignorant of the predicament in which we stand, and of my certain and and happy resource against its effect."

Rosa's

Rosa's face brightened.—Resource ! happy and certain !—“ Ah my dear protectress,” cried she, “ how you console, how you relieve me.”

“ You must remember, however, I speak in confidence—My son, Lord Delworth, is going to marry—can you guess to whom ?—no, you would never suspect—it is the niece of that sordid traitor Sir Solomon Mushroom. Do you comprehend—can you conceive, the pang I inflict on myself, in giving my son a wife from such a stock ?”

“ Terrible !” replied Rosa ; “ it *must* be terrible.”

“ Yes,” and the countess's features retained nothing of their fascinating sweetness, “ you was concerned about the law-suit ; that I disdain ; but to ally my favourite son to a wretch who is true to nothing !”—

“ Oh my dear patroness,” cried Rosa, weeping, “ how I regret the hard necessity, for such I fear it is.”

“ Necessity ! you are right—it is so ; the world will meddle ; and there is but one thing that will mollify its severity, and that is—”

“ Innocence,”

“ Innocence,” interrupted Rosa, eagerly; “ Innocence, conscious innocence, the only thing that will subdue unjust censure.”

“ Innocence !” replied the countess scornfully, “ innocence may possibly do a vast deal in your sphere ; in mine it is of small estimation ; I must look down on my enemies ; my retinue must be augmented ; my establishment more splendid ; my jewels more brilliant ; and my equipage more superb ; my carriage must be, not indeed less winning to my inferiors, but more haughty to my equals, and less obliging to my superiors. Innocence ! how would innocence, unsupported by power or fortune, stand before the Woudbes and Mushrooms of this age. The power I *have*, and the fortune I *will* have. Sir Solomon Mushroom has been my creature ; his fortune was amassed under my protection ; and yet the ingrate would have sacrificed me and mine to the caprice of his low born relation ;—but,—and Lady Gauntlet’s dove-like eyes struck the fire of a hyena ; her voice was raised ; her teeth gnashed, as she uttered in a raised voice—“ but I will be revenged ! I will make his pride feed *mine* ; the riches he has

has gained by *my* influence, shall be devoted to *me* ! Yes, I will be amply *revenged*!"

Where now was the soul-subduing mildness of the never-fading beauty? where, indeed, the beauty itself? The first, at this moment, swallowed up in revenge; the last, deformed by passion;—and though her pliant features instantly resumed the smiling placidity which so well became them, Rosa was transfixed with surprise; and an express arriving on that instant, her ladyship instantly left her, speechless and confounded.

"Good heavens! had not her senses misled her? had she heard, had she seen, did she understand right? was it the gentle, the amiable, the conciliating angel, to whom she had looked up with veneration and respect? or was it a proud, irritated, implacable virago? was it, could it be Lady Gauntlet, who preferred money to innocence? Money!—was money, or any of the base uses to which ill people put it, to be held in competition with such a treasure as conscious innocence? and could Lady Gauntlet make such a preference without being herself guilty? She feared the severity

severity of the world; the world she knew so well, and held in such contempt! and was it then possible she could have so acted as to fear, what so humble a being as herself despised? and if she did fear it, if more, if she was conscious of deserving it, did not that imply that Montreville, her adversary, was the injured party;—and if so, Oh! cried she, exultingly,

“ — how comely it is, and how reviving
“ To the spirits of just men long oppressed,
“ When God, into the hands of their deliverers,
“ Puts invincible might,
“ To quell the mighty of the earth,
“ — the oppressor.”

Yet surely Lady Gauntlet could not be this oppressor. No, the resentment that so transported her out of her amiable self, was against those who had implicated her, and her children in their guilt; and who was so likely to wrong the orphan, and injure the good, as the cold blooded Sir Solomon Mushroom? yes, him the countess accused; and yet, why then hold the first of human felicities

felicities so cheap? why not rather glory in her own self-acquittal?"

Thus fluctuating between the guilty or not guilty, alternately acquitting the countess, and offering a secret prayer for Montreville, she continued till summoned to the breakfast-room. After which, the countess having dispatched her private business, the family and guests were summoned to attend her general inspection of the preparations for the grand wedding.

Variegated lamps, artificial flowers, pillars to look like marble, and painted canvas to look like clouds, did not divert Rosa's mind from the scene that so recently surprised her; and the penetrating countess could not help seeing she had rather over-acted her part.

Mrs. Woudbe was as little inclined to be amused: her mind was in a chaos; she answered no for yes, and yes for no; and her little fat body was so much overbalanced by the weight of her mind, that as soon as she had walked through the litter, she leaned on Rosa, and retired to her chamber.

There, to the astonishment of her humble companion, the repressed anguish burst forth:

she wrung her hands, beat her bosom, tore her hair, and acted the despairing fury, even more naturally, than her friend had done the revengeful one.

Rosa was not more astonished than hurt: she was sorry to see the poor woman in such agonies; but as it was impossible for her to understand how the neglect of a natural brother could produce such absolute desolation, she could not apply consolation applicable to any less extraordinary evil, and therefore sat a silent witness of the extravagance of rage, and the lassitude of despair, till the dinner-hour—when Mrs. Woudbe, pleading indisposition, a chicken was sent up, which Rosa partook.

Lady Gauntlet arose from table before the dessert was removed to visit her afflicted guest, and dropped many hints, no doubt, by way of consolation, which were apparently as ill received by her to whom it was offered, as unintelligible to Rosa.

Mrs. Woudbe, to hide her indignation at the inferences Lady Gauntlet drew from the cause of her grief, pretended to be inclined to rest; and her ladyship, smiling, invited

Rosa to walk once more through the improvements,—she followed in silence.

The film, which the studied and long-practised deceit of the artful countess had thrown over our heroine's native quickness of perception, began to clear: she now saw the same sweet smile, soft voice, and insinuating suavity of manner which had fascinated her, directed indiscriminately to all. The common workmen had their sugar; their masters, plumbs. The sensibility and benevolence, so admirable as the spontaneous effusions of the heart, reduced to a system of policy, were disgusting as well as dangerous. While thus occupied in observation and reflection she followed the graceful step of her she so lately considered as the first of women; the sudden arrival of Lady Louisa and Mr. Brudenel was announced, and, in the same instant, all the sisters, Lord Delworth, and Mr. Brudenel appeared, coming to their mother. Rosa's insignificance was never productive of more agreeable consequences, as she was left among the *féte*-makers to her own thoughts.

Though the evening was very fine, after a very sultry day, the wind was rising, and the

gardener foretold a storm, but assured her she might take her ramble, for that the weather would not change till night.

She accordingly took a new path through the wood; sometimes musing on the events of the last day; sometimes recurring to the past occurrences of her own life; sometimes pitying, at others wondering at Mrs. Woudbe; and oftener, as well as longer, dwelling on that splendour and those honours which would so well become the elegant Montreville, she found herself at the extremity of Delworth woods, and in the exact front of Denning-court castle.

There was something extremely awful in the solemnity and grandeur of this venerable pile of building, silent and almost uninhabited as it appeared; she made an involuntary pause, but seeing a tall gentleman-looking man pass the ponderous gates, with a book in his hand, she hastily turned to another path.

An interview with Lord Denningcourt was by no means her wish, though she felt a curiosity to view every front of the antique castle to which chance had directed her ambulation:

tion: with this view she took a circular beaten path, which, instead of leading to the other front of the castle, brought her between a ridge of rocks to a side of the sea, where she sat down, contemplating the grandeur of the scene, not warned even by the last rays of the setting sun of the hour, till the great clock of the castle struck nine, when, recollecting that she must be a considerable distance from home, she took the path back; but, with all the speed she could make, the evening shut in so fast, as the wind continued to rise, that, by the time she reached the castle, objects were scarce discernable. As, however, she thought herself certain of finding the way, and as bad people about the roads were seldom heard of in that remote situation, she went on as fast as possible, sometimes even running, till her speed was arrested by the sound of human voices; and she presently heard Lord Denningcourt himself directing another person to Delworth.

She stepped a few paces out of the way while his lordship passed, to the castle, without noticing her; and then, regaining the

path, resumed her former speed, intending to join the person, whoever it might be, going to Delworth; but in the moment when she could perceive his shade before her, recollecting there was near two miles to go, most of it through a wood, and as she now saw the person she was so eager to join, was a man, her heart failed; she stopped suddenly, and, to her terror and surprise, a voice cried, "Halt!" she saw the figure before suddenly stop, and heard,

"In my school days, when I lost one shaft,
"I shot the fellow of the self same flight,
"The self same way, and——"

Rosa shrieked with joy: it was her dear humble friend John Brown. She felt not the ground, over which she almost flew, till clasped in his honest arms.

John accidentally met Lord Denningcourt as he was coming from the castle, which he had mistaken for Delworth House, and, ignorant of his quality, bluntly asked the nearest way to Delworth; but notwithstanding his lordship was very explicit, John had no sooner

sooner reached a cross path, than he entirely forgot the one he was directed to take.

"There is," said John, slipping the bundle containing his wardrobe off the end of his oaken stick, which, having first fixed it perpendicular, he let fall,

"There is a Divinity that shapes our steps,

"Rough hew them how we will."

As he was in the act of turning to the path where the stick pointed, after replacing his bundle on the end across his shoulder, "Mr. Brown! dear Mr. Brown! is it you?" cried Rosa.

Down dropped the wardrobe—

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!"

"Ah, Miss Rosy! in meeting you

"My soul hath her content so absolute,

"That not another comfort like to this

"Successes in unknown fate."

"Oh, Mr. Brown!" cried Rosa, "where have you been? and why did you not follow me when I parted from you?"

John liked to answer methodically; but the question puzzled him, inasmuch as he had been so bandied about by fortune, that it was much easier to tell why he did not follow her, than where he had been. The reason therefore being readier than the journal, he briefly answered, he was prevented following her by breaking his leg.

"What! the other leg! oh, poor Mr. Brown!"

"No, no, Miss Rosy," quoth John, "tho'

"Pity is the virtue of the law,

"And none but tyrants use it cruelly,"

you need not pity John Brown on that account; the leg was a bad bit of a stick, made by as bad a carpenter; and as I beckoned another coach just as yours drove off, in my haste to get into it, not being much used to coaches, I hitched my leg, so that it snapped; and by the time I was lifted up, and hop'd into the public house, I had lost sight of you; and then, Miss, I did as I do now—played the woman, and offered a few dollars, for I did not think it just to meddle with your gold, to any

man that would run after your coach. The landlord was very sorry for my misfortunes, so he got a man who would run any where for money; but when I put my hand in my pocket, I had neither my bag of dollars nor your gold. Upon that, Miss, the landlord turned coat directly, and would have taken me up for being robbed, as he said such fellows were a nuisance, if I had not happened to have preserved my bundle, and that made an alteration; so I left a silk handkerchief for a pot of beer, and got a carpenter to make me a leg, and so stumped home to my lodgings, and next morning began a searching all over London for you;—so you see I can't tell you all the places where I have been; but as I could not find you, and as I had parted with part of my bundle, and as the king, God bless him! did not want such soldiers as me, why I was obliged to seek a bit of bread where I could;—and so, Miss, one way and another, I got to watering of horses from place to place, till I made my way to Dunstable, where I saw you riding by; and so, what with walking and riding, jobbing a bit

here and a bit there, you see, Miss, here I am; but no tale nor tidings can I hear of my poor wife, which, to be sure, is a great loss, as well as grief, both to me and her." And again John played the woman.

"My poor friend," cried Rosa, "I wish I could say we will part no more, and that thy troubles were ended."

"That, Miss, I fear will never be till I join my honoured colonel; and if it were to-night, before to-morrow, I should not flinch. Alas! Miss,

"—— I, in mine own woe charm'd,
" Could not find death where I did hear him groan,
" Nor feel him when he struck."

Would I had closed the eyes of my poor master."

Rosa Wept. "Ah! my friend, when he
fell——"

"All was lost, Miss; — but don't you weep — you are young and beautiful, and great with the great; though, to my mind, 'tis better to

"—— be

" ————— be lowly born,
" And range with humble livers in content,
" Than to be perk'd up in a glittering grief,
" And wear a golden sorrow."

Though, to be sure, sorrow is sorrow, gold or not gold ; my poor Betty used to say, " fat sorrow is better than lean ;"—but, poor girl, I fear she has broken her heart. Betty had a goodish heart, Miss, for all she had such a way of shewing it."

While thus John Brown and Rosa walked and wept, she who knew there was a wood to pass, and an ascent through it, expressed some doubts of having missed the right path ; but as John had followed the direction of his stick, and as, moreover, he was just then in the humour to enumerate all Betty's good qualities, he took on himself to be the guide, and so walked on.

" I sometimes think, Miss," continued John, " it might have been better for poor Betty, if she had not been in such a hurry to be married, for you see, Miss, she had a dull time of it—but here is the wood."

"Here is a wood!" replied Rosa; "but I fear not the one we——heavens, what is that!"

"Stand fast, Miss," said John, throwing off his bundle, and standing before Rosa, brandishing his stick—"don't tremble, Miss, I never did see a spirit before; and, by the blessing of God, as I never hurt the hair of any body's head, man, woman, or child, why I don't fear;—but it looks like nothing I ever saw living or dead—and, God forgive me! I believe it is my master."

"No, Mr. Brown—it has a female form."

"A female! alas, poor Betty! then it must be she."

A figure approached, with trembling unequal pace: it was in black flowing robes; its auburn hair covered its head and shoulders; it carried a taper in a glass shade, and, as it passed within a few paces of our heroine, she sunk to the earth. "It is! it is!" she faintly cried.

"Oh, my poor Betty! is it indeed her, Miss? I have looked a fired cannon in the mouth, but I could not look in the face of

poor Betty's spirit. "Lack-a-day ! what can I do for her?"

"Oh, Mr. Brown !" cried Rosa, " assist me to follow—it is my dear departed major's"—

"The major," repeated John, "why Miss, do you think a soldier would go to disfigure his spirit, by wearing petticoats?"

"Only let us follow," cried Rosa, impatiently.

"Stop, Miss Rosa," said John, holding her—

"What, if it tempt you toward the flood,

"Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff

"That beetles o'er his base into the sea,

"And there assume some other horrible form."

The light gleamed faintly through the foliage of distant trees, while Rosa struggled with John, 'till it totally disappeared—when he let her go.

"Ah my dear Mr. Brown," cried Rosa, "how has your cruel kindness distressed me ! what do you fear ?"

"Fear ! Miss Rosa"—

"If

" If it be ought toward the general good,

" Set honour in one eye, and death in the other,

" And I will look on both indifferently"—

but this major's spirit—"

" But this was no spirit; it is the dear truant
my heart pants to recover. Oh Mr. Brown,
indulge me; let us endeavour to retrace her
steps; why should we, who never injured the
living, fear the dead?"

John did not, for himself, fear either living
or dead; and therefore, thus conjured, he
tossed his bundle into the brake, shouldered
his stick, and drawing Rosa's arm under his
own, marched on wherever an open path in the
wood led, without again catching a glimpse
of the light.

Weary, grieved, and disappointed, Rosa
wept; while John, sorry he had, in his good
meaning opposed her wish, kept a profound
silence, till a sudden burst of thunder over
their heads separated the black clouds which
had been gathering the whole evening; and
a flash of lightning striking on some dry un-
derwood, a few yards before them, set it in
a blaze.

So

So narrow an escape from immediate death, could not fail to affect Rosa; she hung trembling on John, covering her eyes with her hand, while the thunder continued to rumble at a greater distance; and after a few minutes, a second burst, with vivid flashes, nearer than the first, deprived her of sense.

John was now in a most perilous situation, holding the inanimate body of one whom, next his master, and Betty, had always been dear to him, and who, now the two most prized were lost, was all he valued on earth. Uncertain whether she was not struck dead, and expecting the same fate every moment himself, he ventured, while the wood was yet burning, and the lightning continue to flash incessantly, to look round, and by the blaze of the fire, distinguished a white building through the trees, which he approached as fast as, with his burthen, he could stump.

A small wicket opened under two large drooping willows, which over-hung the path so close that it was with great difficulty he reached a sort of porch, the door of which stood open; he now proceeded a few paces,

till he reached a flight of steps, where he sat down, and to his unspeakable joy, found Rosa began to revive, but with all the horrors of the storm still impressed on her imagination.

In such a situation, the shelter they had gained, was extremely acceptable. John thought, by the smooth stones on which they trod, and the wide flight of steps, which he said he was sure were marble, they were in a church ; and Rosa, coinciding in the idea, he advised proceeding, as the pews would not be so cold, and the damp struck sensibly on them where they now were.

Again Rosa's arm was locked in John's, while with the other, and the aid of his stick, he explored the unknown region through which they were passing.

"I don't think, after all, it is a church," said John, " for the devil a pew or—"

A deep groan, evidently near, stopped him, and almost annihilated Rosa ; she still hung on the supporting arm of John, while he, convinced in his own mind that the figure they had seen, was, in fact, no more nor less than the ghost of some bad person, manfully roared out

" Let

“ Let the great gods
“ That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
“ Find out their enemies now ! Tremble thou wretch
“ That hast within thee undivulged crimes !
“ ————— I am a man
“ More sinn'd against than sinning.”

The spirit, though thus exorcised, continued the most bitter moans :—Rosa involuntarily advanced ; John, at first, reluctantly followed, till finding her resolute, he pushed on, still feeling forward with his stick, till he reached some sort of termination to the place ; turning round to cheer his trembling companion, he fixed his back against what proved a door, which flying open, laid the wooden-legged hero on his back, and discovered to the eager gaze of Rosa, the very figure she had so earnestly wished to follow in the wood.

It was kneeling on the ground before a sort of stand, strewed with fresh flowers ; its white arms were folded on its whiter bosom ; from its up-cast eyes tears seemed to roll down its pale cheeks ; it was convulsed with sighs : “ O my father ! my dear father ! pity ! forgive ! ”

give !” it distinctly uttered :—When the door flew open it started up, it trembled, it shrieked and fled.

Rosa also shrieked ;—“ Kattie, my dear, dear Kattie,” she cried, “ will you not stay one moment? will you not speak to me? not speak to Rosa, the grateful friend of the father you invoked ?”

No answer was returned ; Rosa advanced ; the taper was left ; she looked round ; horror seized her ; “ Oh my friend,” cried she, “ we are in a receptacle for the dead.”

“ God help us !” cried John, “ 'tis however better than being dead ourselves.”

“ Oh that the dear girl would but have spoken to me ! where can she exist ! oh what can be her motive to become the sad visitor of this dreadful place, at such an hour !”

“ Don’t frighten yourself, Miss, with thinking about the matter ;

“ Infected be the air on which they ride,

“ And damn’d all those that trust in them.”

you see 'tis a spirit, and nothing else but yourself was ever half so handsome, alive or dead, so let us be off.”

“ Stop,

"Stop, my friend," said Rosa, having taken the taper in her hand, "here a poor beggar, like me, or a poor cripple, like you, may approach all, that when living, would have spurned us for our miseries. See what trophies adorn that nich; there rests the dust of some great general; and here the coronet and cushion—heavens! what do I see! Denningcourt!—this then is the mausoleum of the Denningcourts. See, here is a coffin quite fresh—'Wentworth, thirteenth Earl of Denningcourt, obit.'—ah, not two years.—What a place for youth and beauty to select for meditation."

John had by this time arisen from the ground, and found his supporter, the oaken stick; "Yes," said he, looking round, "you all

"Are melted into air, into thin air;
"And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
"The solemn—"

"Ah Mr. Brown," cried Rosa, "look, here."—

"'Tis

“ ‘Tis a baby’s coffin, Mifs—and a very pretty one—quite fresh too.”

“ Oh read, read !”—the tears fast flowed from Rosa’s eyes, as she removed the fresh flowers from a small coffin on tressels, by which the figure in black knelt, while John read.

“ As is the bud cut by an envious worm,

“ Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to heaven,

“ Or dedicate his beauty to the sun.”

“ ‘Tis Shakespear’s, Mifs,” said John, with an air of exultation.

“ Oh, I too fatally understand this !” cried Rosa.

“ That,” replied John, “ is Shakespear’s particular beauty ; any child may understand, what the most learned cannot fail to admire.”

“ And, what is here ? I cannot read,—my tears blind me ;” and the drops fell from her eyes on a silver breast plate of the coffin.

John hoped to find more of his adored author, and read, “ Wentworth, infant son of Wentworth, fourteenth Earl of Denningcourt, born April 16th, 17— died June 5th following :

“ All

" All more than common menaceth an end."

" That's not Shakespear, Miss, and you see the difference ; a child cannot understand that—"

Rosa, with her eyes fixed on the infant coffin, retraced such a combination of circumstances, as convinced her, the solution of this mystery was to be found at Denningcourt-castle ; and the certainty that Mr. Brown's stick had failed in pointing to the right path, led to the natural conclusion, that, instead of going towards Delworth, they had, by a retrograde movement, turned towards Denningcourt.

That this mausoleum, which indisputably belonged to the family, could be at no great distance from that, or some other habitation, was certain, as Kattie could not have rambled bare-headed, alone at that hour, far from her residence.

While she revolved on this circumstance and compared it with Lady Gauntlet's report, that Lord Denningcourt vegetated in a corner of his old castle, with a girl of whom he was fond, she heard the sound of approach-

ing

ing feet, and a voice, half reproach and half tender, call, " where are you, my dear girl ? why ?—Astonishment ! Miss Walsingham ! for God's sake, what has brought you here ? where is ?"—he looked round with anxiety.

" Ah, Lord Denningcourt, where indeed is the lovely, the dear Kattie Buanun ?"

" You know her !—I am surprized !—I thought she was here :—But how ?—I have heard of a Mrs. Walsingham, but not—"

" Oh !" and Rosa wrung her hands in agony, " if that dear woman had seen the child of her lov'd friend, as I this night have seen her !"—

Lord Denningcourt was no lounger at this moment, he was all animation ;—" where," said he, " is she ?"

Rosa could not speak, but pointed the way she fled : He instantly left her ; and in half a minute she heard him call for assistance ; she snatched up the taper, and rushing after, found Kattie a few paces from the entrance of the mausoleum, in convulsions, his lordship supporting her, and a female attendant chafing her temples.

John's

John's assistance was now of great service ; they proceeded, by Lord Denningcourt's direction, a short cut through the wood, and having crossed an angle of the park, reached the castle, which they entered by a back way, and the servants assisting, Kattie was very soon laid on her bed, where she slowly recovered from her fit, and recognized our heroine with a burst of tender joy, as the amiable, the good, the virtuous Rosa, the friend of her beloved father, the monitress of her dear innocent sisters, and hanging round her neck, shed a torrent of tears.

Rosa returned her embrace with unaffected sincerity ; but the joy of meeting was, on neither side, unmixed with painful sensations.

Rosa had, at last, found the daughter of her deceased friend, but how found her ? in the exact situation, though not with the person whom she suspected,—lost to the world, to her friends, and to honour ; she, whose beauty was, in the partial estimation of her friends, a gem of that rare value, that should command the world, was shut up from every eye, but a few rustic domestics, mourning for the offspring

offspring of her guilt; all her present and future peace depending on the frail tenure of a man's fancy, to whom nothing was new under the sun; with so much obloquy attached to her situation, it would be injurious even to her, to be known only to remain one night with her.

Kattie, on her part, was overwhelmed with shame: she knew the purity of Rosa's mind, and never had she stood in so much awe of the rectitude of her principles, as at this moment, when the dejected and thoughtful silence, which succeeded her first joyful emotions at meeting subsided, and the coldness and even aversion, with which she scarce noticed the compliments of Lord Denningcourt, were an explanation of feelings that went to her heart; she however begged Lord Denningcourt would have the goodness to leave her alone with the friend of her youth, and again, on his complying with her request, hid her face and wept.

Rosa's tears accompanied the anguish of poor Kattie, whom, after mourning for so long, she found weak and scarce recovered from

from confinement: After having brought a son into the world, whom, in the same instant that it filled her young heart with new cares, and awakened it to inexpressible delights of maternal fondness, she had seen expire in her arms. In the agonies of grief, into which this incident threw her, she had no associate:— Lord Denningcourt's former life had been too busy, his pleasures too indiscriminate, and his mind too volatile to be at once reconciled to so mortifying a change as living in an old castle with *one* woman, though that one was a master-piece of nature, without society, and almost without attendants; and poor Kattie, whose sensible mind and real fine understanding had been entirely neglected, while she had been made a perfect adept in all personal endowments, had no resource against the indifference which he had good nature himself enough to regret, but retiring to a corner of her high-roofed chamber, and there, under the gilded remains of former grandeur, mourn that fall from innocence which included every other misfortune.

She had been content to exchange general admiration for the vows of eternal constancy of one dear object ; with him, and for him, she retired from the world ; for his sake she had left her fond mother, her family and friends,—for was he not all in one !

Fascinated by the delicious delirium of present joy, she had no apprehension of a change in her lover which she felt it was impossible could ever happen in herself, till the listless ear, the vacant eye, the weary yawn, and a conviction that those we love are never answered with monosyllables, roused her from fond security, banished all the delusions of the heart, and left her on a fearful precipice, shuddering at the gulph beneath.

Lord Denningcourt's valet and first footman, who had made fortunes during the reign of prodigality, were attached to his person ; and, as they followed his fallen fortunes, could not fail to be high in his favour.

They had been long in the habit of perceiving, even before he was himself sensible of change, when a lady was in danger of becoming a falling favourite,—the symptoms were

were certain—and Kattie might give orders, she might ring till the wires broke,—those gentlemen had much more of their lord's real favour, at present, than herself, and would neither say nor sing a note more or less than exactly pleased themselves.

Kattie had pride and discernment; but the insolence of the servants were trifles, in comparison with the coldness of their lord; and though one was the natural effect of the other, it was that which she regretted, not that which she suffered, that affected her health, injured her beauty, and effectually destroyed the vivacity so necessary to kill ennui in an old castle,

But while Kattie bore her misfortune with meekness, and while she would not appear to notice the neglect of the servants, a woman, who waited on her, was kept in a constant state of irritation by them, and made their behaviour, the perpetual subject of her harangues and complaint: “These fellows”, she would say, in the hearing of Kattie, “treat me as if I was dirt under their feet: *me*, who had a good character, and have lost it by

coming here to wait on a kept mistress ; me, who have lived in credit ; me, who have always served married ladies before I came here, to lose my character, and be insulted by such fellows !”

Poor Kattie’s present feelings evinced none of that insensibility which belonged to her former character :—If she recollects the flattery of native friends, it was with bitter condemnation of their want either of judgment or sincerity ; if she saw that face in a mirror, which had engrossed so much of her time, and which had been so often contemplated with exultation, it was to mourn the fatal beauty that at so early a period of life reduced her to such exquisite misery ; and if, in search of a particle of consolation, she turned her aching thoughts on those whose love was not the effect of appetite, self-gratification, or local circumstance ; on her honoured father, her tender mother, innocent sisters, she involuntarily hid her face, and rushed to the most retired of the open apartments, to hide, if possible, from herself ; and all the sad comfort

of her existence were nightly visits to the cold remains of her lost child.

These were the confessions which, drowned in tears and hanging in anguish round her neck, the miserable girl committed to the confidence of the sympathizing Rosa ;—but what could Rosa do to alleviate the misfortunes of a young creature, in whom error was rooted, by an attachment to the object of her first love ; against the fond tie that bound her to her seducer how weak were all the arguments, virtue suggested, or interest could offer ; nay, how weak even the conviction that she was no longer dear to him.

Rosa represented the miserable state of her mother ; described her distraction at her loss ; and even left an opening for her to believe, the marriage with Frazer was in consequence of the imbecility grief left on her mind ;—she urged the honour of a family, which, every hour that she continued with Lord Denning-court, was more deeply wounded ; and lastly, informed her of the fortunate return of Colonel Buanun's servant, by whose information, it was now probable, his property, to a

large amount, would be recovered,—sufficient she hoped to give independence to the children of the major.

To all these arguments Kattie was deaf:—“ No,” said she, “ I left my mother, and for that fatal crime my heart is torn with remorse; I will not risk a feeling more bitter and that would destroy me, by leaving him whom I consider as my husband; if I am left by *him*, I will hide my shame and misery together,—but never return to those friends I have wounded, and that family I have disgraced.

Rosa wept:—“ What then, my dearest Kattie, can be done to soften the severity of your fate? what shall I say to you? I, even I, must not—”

“ I know it, dear Rosa,—I know it;—you would lose your own character; by consoling the miserable, you would be accused of approving the errors humanity impelled you to deplore; your virtue would be thought contaminated by receiving into your pure bosom the tears of a penitent; you dare not forgive whom you pity;—and when strict chastity of sentiment

sentiment assimilates with practice, all this is right; the distinction should be broad and glaring; it is then a beacon to the innocent, and a just punishment to the fallen.—Oh Rosa! if I, who had every advantage of birth, fond parents, and partial friends; I, who ungratefully dishonoured the one, and abandoned the other;—if, after planting daggers in the heart of my mother, and covering my innocent and amiable sisters with shame; if I found it easy to regain that high eminence where you, who are alone in the world, supported only by your own tight sense and innate honour, equally destitute of friends, fortune, and protectors, so firmly stand, where would be the crown of the virtuous? where the sting of guilt?"

Rosa was no less surprised than charmed at sentiments which misery had in so short a time matured; and the more absolute the necessity for her abandoning the dear girl, the more reluctant she felt to do it.—" If you will not leave Lord Denningcourt?"

" I cannot,—do not wish to leave him."

L 4

" Will

“ Will you consent to my acquainting your guardian with your situation ? ”

“ Oh no ! —the Doctor would hold himself bound to tear me from my lord, not only as my guardian, but as my father’s friend : Oh Rosa, as the friend of my dear, my honourable father, will he not ” —

Again she threw herself on Rosa’s bosom ; who, unable to combat the dreadful meaning of her last objection, mingled tears with her, till it was quite day-light, when she prepared to take, what she feared must be a last leave, of the weeping Kattie.

Lord Denningcourt’s rest had not before been broken by Kattie’s nocturnal visits to the remains of his son : —he had at first objected to, and then laughed at them ; but happening to recollect on this night the wooden-legged man, who, with breath impregnated with amber, had enquired his way to Delworth, it struck him that the enquiries might be a mask of some villainous design ; and, on advancing to the window, seeing the fond mother slowly crossing the path of the park, which led to the mausoleum, and enter
the

the wood which surrounded it, alarmed for her safety, he rung for her servant, and ordered her to follow her mistress.

The woman, out of humour and premeditating to leave her place, could not be prevailed on to enter the sanctuary of the dead, at that lone hour, for a mistress, who, as her influence diminished, she felt little inclined to respect.

Lord Denningcourt had certainly outlived his first passion for Kattie, but humanity and courage were ingrafted in his nature; the one induced him to insist on the woman's following her mistress, and the other impelled him to follow her.

On returning from the apartment, he had a curiosity to learn what possible connection there could be between so beautiful and lady-like young person as Miss Walsingham, and the shabby-looking cripple with whom he found her, and who had followed her to the castle.

John, though he had in the meantime been regaled in the servants' hall much to his heart's content, was very guarded in his answers to Lord Denningcourt; but when

that nobleman spoke in a high strain of encomium of the fair stranger, as he called Rosa, John was no longer master of his secret; he gave Rosa's history with all the simple grace of honest affection—declaring she was right heir to all Colonel Buhanun's fortune;—but as

“The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
“Do make instruments to scourge us,”

why it must go to the children of one Major Buhanun, who, poor things, little expected such a wind fall.

This was an interesting piece of intelligence to Lord Denningcourt; he could not but be anxious to secure that independance for the young creature he had ruined, which it was not in his own power to give her, he knew nothing of the finances nor arrangements of her father; but, judging from the extravagance of her mother, supposed Kattie had no dower but her beauty; returned to her apartment, on hearing that the ladies were about to separate, when he heard from Rosa a confirmation of the pleasing intelligence, and

and unwilling to defer a business of such interest and importance, proposed sending an immediate messenger to the guardians.

To this Rosa objected. She had it as much at heart to secure a comfortable asylum for John's age, as to serve the children of the major, and chose he should himself be the bearer of his own good tidings.

Kattie, who appeared totally uninterested in the event, declared she would rather die a beggar than let her guardian know her situation; and expressed herself with such vehemence on the subject, that Lord Denning-court immediately dropped all other concern in the business than to advise, since she was so averse to have her situation known, that the honest creature with the wooden leg should remain at Denningcourt till Miss Walsingham's dispatches were ready: he could, he said, trust his own servant with the management of him; but if once Lady Gauntlet got the smallest hint, she would not rest till she was in possession of the business, which would also include every thing connected with it.

Rosa could not, in the present tumult of her mind, decide on the right or wrong of this plan ; she indulged a sort of latent hope, that if Colonel Buanun's assets were what John insisted, Kattie might, with her share of the major's fortune added to it, be no contemptible wife for an indigent man of quality ; and she was anxious to have an asylum settled for her poor friend Brown. The only objection, therefore, to dispatch him immediately from Denningcourt, was that suggested by Kattie, in respect to the worthy Doctor Cameron.

This, however, was soon obviated ; for John having, in consequence of the heat of the weather, and his dusty station on the outside of the stage, swallowed a hearty draught of amber at every house where it stopped, his head had been so confused, that he had not the smallest conception madam at the castle was a Scotchwoman. Rosa, therefore, as her heart and her honour condemned her for every moment she now remained under Lord Denningcourt's roof, left to him the management of honest John's journey ; and promising

mising to send the letters for him to Denningcourt as soon as she could arrange them, tore herself from the tears and embraces of the unfortunate Kattie, and, accompanied by John, who, entreating to see her at least part of the way, she made ride with her in a low garden chair, the only carriage kept at the castle, while the footman walked near the head of the horse, she set off towards Delworth and during the short ride, gave John instructions for his conduct both before and after his arrival at Edinburgh.

Having reached the back gate of the house, shaken hands, and said as many kind things as she had spoken words, she alighted, and was already within the gates.

“ Ah, Miss Rosy!” said John.

Rosa stopped.

“ Oh, Miss Rosy !

“ Should we be taking leave

“ As long a term as yet we have to live,

“ The lothness to depart would grow——”

Rosa waved her hand.

John

John mournfully turned his head as the footman turned the chaise homeward, and cried, with a slow flourish of his arm,

“ What! gone without a word!

“ Aye, so true love should do: it cannot speak;

“ For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it.”

“ By your leave, Mr. Timbertoe,” said the footman, “ I will ride with you back, instead of that pretty young lady; and if you’ll take my advice, dry up your tears;—what the devil signifies snivelling; and as to talking of true love, d——c ‘tis a bore.”

“ Ah!” cried John,

“ A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,

“ We bid be quiet when we hear it cry;

“ But we— we burthened with like weight of pain,

“ As much or more we should ourselves complain.”

The man stared, but did not think such nonsense worth any more of his wit; so the garden chair having conveyed them back to Denningcourt, the valet first tried on John a plain suit of mourning and some linen of his own, which happened to fit; then shewed him to a bed in his chamber, and left him to rest.

C H A P. VI.

“ I find this pretty, said Gargantu, when his mare, a beast of quality, laid waste the neighbouring woods.”

IT was near six when Rosa passed through a wilderness of sweets to Delworth House, where the only domestic stirring was the dairy-maid, who, rejoicing at her return, hastened to tell how the family were alarmed at her absence; how the servants had been sent different ways in search after her; and how sorry they all were she was not found.

Rosa thanked the girl for her solicitude, and went immediately to her chamber, when it struck her, for the first time, that it would be indispensably necessary to adduce some motives

motives for absenting herself during a whole night—not only to the principals, but even to the domestics of the family where she resided.

To reveal the name and family of the unfortunate mistress at Denningcourt castle, was what she resolved not to do; yet how to avoid it, without leaving a stigma on her own character, was the point that distressed her. She remembered the late-discovered traits in the character of Lady Gauntlet which proved her not the all-perfect creature she once esteemed her; but while she had the honour to reside under the earl's roof, no doubt the countess would expect the elucidation of so extraordinary a step, nor would Mrs. Woudbe feel less anxious that a young person under her protection, should clear every imputation on her character.

The more she reflected, the more difficult appeared her situation; and she at length resolved to reveal all the circumstances in confidence to Lady Gauntlet, whose wisdom and policy she had so often admired, and be guided

guided by her in respect to the explanations proper to be given to the family.

Having thus settled this embarrassing point, her next consideration was, that it would be little less indelicate to have any connections at the castle, than to repeat her visits there; and therefore, the sooner she made up her packet for John, the sooner he would set off to Scotland, and the sooner also would all ostensible intercourse at Lord Denningcourt's cease.

Colonel Buanun's letters were a treasure that always made part of her baggage; and her mind being too much agitated for sleep, she arranged the packets before her, according to their several dates; and having spread a napkin on the carpet to receive those not relevant to the point she had at heart, she selected those that were, and inclosing them with a letter from herself to Doctor Cameron in one envelope, was on the point of sealing it, when, recollecting one particular letter of the colonel's, in which his faithful servant was more warmly mentioned than in those she had selected, which were not among

among the rest, she removed some clothes to search for it, with such impetuosity, that a small box, committed to her especial care by Mrs. Woudbe, dropped down; the lock burst, and a number of papers falling out, they mixed promiscuously with the colonel's letters.

A more vexatious accident could not happen to one who, of all the descendants of Eve, had the least disposition to pry into other people's affairs.

But as regret for the accident would not replace the papers in the box, her first thought was to lock her chamber-door, acquaint Mrs. Woudbe with what had happened, and request her to divide the papers herself; but, like many others of the first thoughts of sages under twenty, that would not do; for, in that case, all the directions of her own letters would be seen, and must lead to explanations as unpleasant to Lady Gauntlet as disagreeable to herself, since she could not allow the having been known by two names, without assigning a motive, which would directly contradict the good report given

given of her by that lady when she declared the family and connection of our heroine were perfectly known to her.

Besides, Mrs. Woudbe was still either in the arms of Morpheus, or she was calling down the vengeance of the gods on her cruel natural brother ; in either case, her bed was not likely to be discarded for the finest morning that ever shone out of the heavens ; and waiting for her rising, would retard the packet for John, and delay his journey to the north. Well then, on second thoughts, which most people think best, why should she hesitate about dividing the papers herself? sure her discretion, and more, her honour, would stand the test of her own secret tribunal ; and well might others doubt, who doubted themselves.

Behold her, then, on her knees, dividing and subdividing. The covers were all addressed to her, and the hand-writing that of the dear natural brother : one packet only lay among the rest about which she was doubtful, as it was inclosed in an envelope, without seal or address.

mol

Rosa

Rosa had employed some of her leisure hours, since she had been at Delworth, in copying some sonnets from the Welch bards—a collection she had never seen before; and as it was an expensive one, thought it likely she might never meet it again: these she had folded up in a blank sheet, and put carelessly among her papers.

Now, whether the cover she held in her hand was that, or whether it were part of Mrs. Woudbe's precious deposit, could only be proved by opening: it was not the sonnets—that was clear at the first glance; but a combination of letters, more musical than all Handel's composition, arrested every sense: this was—

“Your faithful and adoring

“H. MONTREVILLE.”

She sunk on the ground, turned first red, then pale, and indeed experienced the several sensations inseparable from the divine passion, when the heart is rather disposed

“To suffer love as a painful sentiment, than to enjoy it as an agreeable emotion.”

from

from which she recovered, as is usual in such cases, on a sudden recollection, which had neither rhyme nor reason in it.

The little portmanteau, which had been the companion of her humble travels, lay conveniently enough in Mrs. Woudbe's travelling trunk;—in it she had packed her papers and other *petites affaires*, together with the box entrusted to her care. Now, as the “faithful and adoring Montreville” could not be addressed to any creature but herself, it was clear as the sun, which at that moment, three quarters past seven, gilded the hemisphere, that the Pontefract chamber-maid had been prevailed on to slide this precious letter into the little portmanteau, which the most scrupulous delicacy did not forbid her now to read.

With trembling fingers, burning cheeks, and beating heart, then, she read,

“ *My darest woman,*”—bold enough, however, and not vastly polite, she thought—“ *how could you so cruelly disappoint me?*”—well, that was better.—“ *To be shure, my darest, pretty crater,*”—heavens! could that

that be Montreville? and to Rosa? sure he must have been delirious!—“*you must know, nothing is so dare to me as your dare self. I kept my eye on Madam Devildom—what's her cramp name's door.*”—“What stuff is here!” cried Rosa, turning the paper again to look at the signature. “Yes, it is Montreville—‘H. Montreville.’ The man must have been deranged!” She, however, proceeded, till the paper dropped from her nerveless fingers.

While, therefore, the room turns round with Rosa; while, even when scorched by the sun, the world is to her one black curtain, and while she staggers to the window for air, the reader is presented with the whole of the extraordinary letter.

“*My darest woman,*
“*How could you so cruelly disappoint me?*
To be shure, my dare pretty crater, you must know, nothing is so dare to me as your dare self. I kept my eye on Madam Devildom—what's her cramp name's door; but oh! Hyenna!
as you are, you never camed at all, but sent my pretty

pretty correspondent. Devil take me, my charmer, if I was not in such a hurrecan of a fury, that faith, I was near beating up your quarters to brake every bone in your ugly husband's skin; and, to be shure, if love for you, my dare woman, had not come in in the nick, I dare say my passion would have told him all, and more too; for if a man loves a dare woman to death, he is used like a dog;—and how, my dare crater, can you think the great blood boiling over in my veins can stoop to receive obligations from any dare hand but your own. If you think to deceive me, faith, my dare woman, you reckon wrong—for I shall hate you; and when a man hates a dare woman after she has made him happy, sloop him who can? So, my charming woman, let us be faithful and loving, and not do things by deputy—by way of witness.—I saw Miss Walsingham go to Crox; but though the cause stands still for want of cash, I scorn to take the baubles from any but yourself; and I advertise you I have changed my lodgings; but you may write to the old place. The affair comes on directly—nothing wanting but my darest woman,

woman to be true to her faithful and adoring

“H. MONTREVILLE.”

“N. B. Consider, dare woman, this masquerade is nothing to what you will treat all the world with when you are a Countess; and may the next thing I put in my mouth be poison if I, when I am Earl of Gauntlet, don’t give your husband the go-by, and let him prove himself a cuckold, which is a genteeler thing than a dirty commoner has any right to expect, and marry you, my dare woman, next day.”

If the reader expects to be told with what alternate bursts of anguish and indignation Rosa read the letters of the “faithful, adoring Montreville,” it is an unreasonable expectation; for no language is equal to the task. True, it had not come to her hands by the direct and fair means that would justify the sentiments it inspired, to those who had in their own hearts the best reason for doubting the veracity of others; but Rosa was not now to learn that criminality is attached to the

the motive, not the event of our actions; nor that equity weighs the former, while frailty and prejudice are guided by the latter.

Self-acquitted then, nothing could divert her horror and astonishment from the mystery, wickedness and cunning of the letter, which proved, that Montreville, presumptive heir to the Earldom of Gauntlet and Mrs. Woudbe's pretended natural brother, was one and the same person, and a confederate in a scene of iniquity too evident for candour's self to doubt.

The just indignation Rosa conceived, on finding she had been the convenience of a licentious commerce, was followed by a detestation of Mrs. Woudbe, and compassion for her husband; such atrocious wickedness, such ingratitude, never, never, Rosa was sure, could have been before committed by a matron, a mother (almost a grandmother); one to whom so many looked up, but, on whom all who *knew* her, must look down. Nothing, indeed, less than the evidence of her senses, having been innocently employed in the horrid business, having seen him watch her to

La Croix's, and supposing he would indeed be an Earl, could convince her "such things are."

But Rosa had not lived with ladies of Utopia in the year 1797; and therefore, warm with resentment for the degrading insult offered her character by the imposition, with the letter in her hand, scalding tears on her cheek, and her face and neck burning with heat, she appeared, unannounced, before Lady Gauntlet in her dressing-room.

Her ladyship, it has been before observed, lost no time in any of her arrangements: she was now up, and had not only made inquiry after Rosa, but knew where she had passed the night;—not that she was an absolute witch; for the good creature, whose character suffered by waiting on poor Kattie, having once been a useful domestic of Lady Gauntlet's, continued to pay her court, by bringing or sending to Delworth, anecdotes as they occurred at Denningcourt castle;—among these, that the most welcome, was the certainty that the poor mistress was a falling favourite.

The

The countess's passion was, as the philosopher said of the *passions* of young men, "Not truly in her heart, but in her eyes, and always inflamed after every interview." She had, for the first time since her arrival at Delworth, met Lord Denningcourt, in her ride, on the morning before; and as it was an established maxim with her, that nothing inspires so strong an inclination for a new mistress, as being heartily tired of an old one; and though she had already more affairs on her hands than any woman beside herself could possibly manage; and though his lordship neither paid nor received any visits, she sent him a card, inviting him to meet her, on *business*, in a pretty temple at the extremity of Delworth woods, adjoining his own demesne.

Lord Denningcourt, though punctual to time and place, was so insufferably stupid, that her ladyship was quite out of patience, and would have been at a loss for *business* to entertain him with, had not her kindness to Rosa, on his account, occurred.

Lord Denningcourt admired Rosa's beauty, but she had not interested his passions: he

knew Mrs. Woudbe well, and he was intimate with Lord Aron Horsemagog : he could therefore readily credit the report which, thro' his valet, reached him of that nobleman's adding the companion of such a woman to his list. He certainly thought our heroine's countenance innocent and interesting ; but as he had thought so of many other countenances, which he afterward discovered to be visors, there was nothing extraordinary in the affair ; he therefore yawned cold thanks, played with his dogs, complained of time, and sauntered off, leaving the fair lady so mortified, disappointed and enraged, that, strange to tell, she actually wept.

But such strangers as tears were not to be encouraged on Lady Gauntlet's downy cheeks ; despising Lord Denningcourt, and even herself, she returned home to smile, and be all grace and goodness ; but spite of her entire command of features, the contempt with which the bewitching Denningcourt had treated her, banished sleep from her eyes ; and a note from the handmaid at the castle, delivered before she was up next morning,

was

was ill calculated to smooth her brow when Rosa entered; who, besides the culpable appearance which staying out all night gave her character, had now, and that unsuspected by herself, the jealous pride of a vindictive woman to appease.

At Denningcourt! Miss Walsingham at Denningcourt! there then, was a solution of Lord Denningcourt's coldness, not only to his mistress, for that was natural enough, but to her, which was as unnatural; Oh, the specious, deceitful thing!

The "specious, deceitful thing" was now before her, agitated, trembling, and panting for breath; she presented the open letter to the countess, and overcome by a variety of struggling passions, sunk on the sofa, without noticing the frown of her patroness. Nothing mortal occupied her, but the arch dissembler, Montreville, and the despicable Mrs. Woudbe.

Lady Gauntlet having read the letter through, without betraying any of those marks of indignant surprise Rosa expected, coolly demanded how it came into her hands?

" You

" You have not, Miss, I hope," said she, " betrayed any confidence to get it ? "

" Confidence ! " repeated Rosa—her face in a glow.

" Confidence is not less sacred, Miss, because some trifling censure may happen to be attached to the person who reposes it."

Trifling censure ! the words rung hollow on Rosa's ear, but did not prevent her exonerating herself from the implied accusation.

Lady Gauntlet answered with *sang froid*, that it was mighty well ; in the intercourse of the world, it was often necessary to be ignorant of what one knew, and totally forget what one remembered :—there was but one thing in the letter she did not comprehend.

One thing ! and but one thing ! heaven and earth ! was this Lady Gauntlet ? was it a wife—a mother ? was it, indeed, according to her idea of womanhood, a woman ?

" What is all this about the jewels ? " asked the countess.

Rosa's answer, would have been unintelligible to any person less acute and experienced than

than her beautiful ladyship ; but, as we have said of Lord Denningcourt, nothing was new to her under the sun, except the precise feelings which at this moment wrung her heart, —“ wounded pride, and ill requited love,” or some such passion ; and it was with secret triumph she saw the heart of her innocent rival flutter through her tucker, with emotions somewhat similar.

“ I told you,” said she, with one of her best smiles, “ the young man’s character would open as you knew him better :—he is really a clever fellow, with his pretty creature! Only that poor Woudbe is below ridicule, or this would be a companion to the jewels of the Portuguese. Upon my honour, Miss Walsingham, it is paying you a sorry compliment to prefer Woudbe to you ; but men are capricious animals ; I advise you, if not too late, to shun them.”

Rosa’s fixed eyes were on the countess, really starting out of her head.

“ This Montreville,” continued the countess, “ knows what he is about ; he has *fairly* taken Woudbe in—I say *fairly*, because her

intrigues have been too various to be suspected of sacrificing interest to a passion she has worn to rags; but, like her husband, she lays out her property to advantage: he must marry her—no man of honour or honesty can go from such a promise."

"*Honour and honesty!*" repeated Rosa, with contempt.

"Are they not synonymous, Miss Walsingham?"

"Not exactly, I believe, madam. Every honest man will certainly be a man of honour; but every man of honour, such, at least, as I have lately heard so distinguished, is—"

"Not honest, perhaps, you think. How accurately you distinguish!—but don't be too severe; you are jealous, child—you don't like a rival—few people do. What would you say, if you were obliged to resign a title and its appendages—and your *friend*, if you please—entertained you with anticipations of an event that would invest her with the honours you lost? This I *have* borne;—and how do you think I *could* bear it? Why by more certain anticipations of the downfall of her card-houses.

houses. But really I begin to think I shall have the honour to congratulate her countesship after all; the man has so committed himself——”

Rosa's clasped hands, uplifted eyes, and the horror and aversion portrayed in every speaking feature, interrupted her ladyship: she scarce articulated, “The confidant! are you then the confidant of such a transaction? what mystery, what shocking mystery, what enchantment is this? how can the tongue expatiate on female honour? how can it profess to adore virtue, when the heart is so tainted?”

Lady Gauntlet arose. “How dare—”

“Spare your passion, Lady Gauntlet—my fear of you expired with my respect.”

“And is this the return for my kindness, —my condescension?”

“Yes, madam, by kindly placing me under the roof of an infamous woman, you have insulted me; and by condescending to act a part under her, you have degraded yourself, your sex, your family, and your children.”

It was now Lady Gauntlet who was confounded: she had, presuming on the

uniform mildness of Rosa's character, fancied she could frown her to an atom; instead of which, it was herself who was awed,—it was however, but for a moment.

"Keep your temper, Miss," said she—"I am a confidant, though not *yours*, of your sleeping last night at Denningcourt castle; and surely, if people should be so malicious as to fix a stigma on such a step, and if regard for the honour of my family should oblige me to discard a young person who so offended decency, as to make a nocturnal visit to a nobleman of Lord Denningcourt's character, my subsequent knowledge of the transaction would not implicate me in the guilt."

"If it were as easy, madam, for your friend to prove her honour, as it is for me to manifest my innocence——"

"What, then," and a ray of pleasure darted from Lady Gauntlet's eyes, "you deny you was at Denningcourt castle?"

"No, I do not."

"You did not sleep there?"

"No, I did not."

"Nor stay there the night?"

"Yes, I did."

"Imprudent

"Impudent wretch! leave my presence before I spurn you hence."

Rosa did as she was commanded, secretly rejoicing that the discovery of Mrs. Woutibe's infamy, had preceded the unlimited confidence she meant to have placed in Lady Gauntlet. Her dismissal from the family was, as she now considered it, a thing of course; and though it reduced her to the necessity of seeking another situation, she had Mr. Garnet's comfortable asylum: thither she resolved to go, after John was dispatched to Scotland. She immediately closed the packet for him;—but the sending it off, was a matter of more difficulty than might be expected, from a house where there were so many domestics, by those who do not understand the magic, that in an instant conveys the sentiments which actuate the lord or lady, or master or mistress, of a great family to their servants.

First, Mrs. Modely, my lady's woman, had always thought Miss Walsingham, who as only humble companion, when turned out of one place, could not perhaps get another,

need not have been set above her, who would not turn her back on any one, in any thing about a lady; for her part, she thought what it would come to; but as Miss was then stuck up at the first table, she would not now sit down at the second with a person who stopped all night with gentlemen.

My lord's valet thought her a devilish fine creature; but as he supposed Lady Gauntlet would not approve of it, he would not take any notice of her. On the credit of those high personages, then, there was not a servant in the house who did not either turn up their noses or laugh out right, when our heroine was in their sight.

Rosa saw all this, without feeling the smallest resentment; she was conscious that her conduct did stand justly impeached, and resolved not to give the only explanation that could do away the imputations on her character, as that would lead to circumstances which must expose the child of her deceased friend, and by disclosing her name and situation, render the latent hope she fondly indulged,

dulged, of seeing her the wife of her seducer, abortive.

The only thing in the behaviour of the servants that hurt her was, the impossibility of sending her packet to John through them; but as the out-door domestics might not yet have adopted the same conduct, or if they had, might be easier prevailed on to change it on certain conditions, she walked into the garden, and easily prevailed on an old labourer, who was employed to roll the lawn, to be her messenger to Denningcourt castle.

Having completed this important affair, she returned to her chamber; and, after dividing the presents of both her patronesses from her own clothes, and packing the latter in her portmanteau, and the other in a parcel, replaced Mrs. Woudbe's letters in the box, which, as the lock was broke, she fastened with tape, and having sealed it, without the smallest inclination to read another line of the "faithful and adoring Montreville's" writing, she carried it to Mrs. Woudbe's chamber, or rather her chamber door; for there Mrs.

Jup

Jup her woman, stood centry. Nobody could be admitted, she said, as her mistress was quite ill with the fright at Miss Walsingham's staying out all night; which, to be sure, was a little oddish, though, as Mrs. Modely said, no more than might be expected.

Now this was a little fib of Mrs. Jup's; for though Mrs. Woudbe was certainly ill enough at ease, she was able to receive and hold a long and interesting conversation with her friend Lady Gauntlet, who was at that precise moment deep in her trouble and counsels.

Rosa, however, returned to her chamber, desiring to be informed, when Mrs. Woudbe was disposed to see her.

As all further favours from Lady Gauntlet were as little expected as desired, and as she waited to dismiss herself from the place she was so ill qualified to fill, her thoughts naturally recurred to the mode of returning to London.

John had mentioned his being set down from the stage at Denningcourt; and as it was

was now probable she must be taken up at at the same place, and that, instead of rolling thither, as she had twice done since her residence at Delworth-house, in a splendid equipage, she must be content to be carried there by her own streight limbs, she threw up the lash, to trace with her eye the nearest way.

Denningcourt was situated on a small eminence, a few fields distant from the new jointure-house in Denningcourt park; and as the day was remarkably clear, she could distinctly see the path from Delworth, woods, through the park, by the fine new house, to the village.

She then cast a tearful eye on the sombre grandeur of the old castle, where the guilty, miserable Kattie wept over errors she had not resolution to forsake, and where every night she was entombed with her dead son. Sad were the reflections this thought gave rise to, and no less grievous than unavoidable was the stern necessity of withholding from the forlorn beauty, the comfort and relief of her society. The unconscious tear stood on

her

her cheek when Mrs. Jup brought a note from Mrs. Woudbe, to decline seeing her on the score of ill health, but to say her woman would report any message she might choose to deliver.

Rosa chose to write; and Mrs. Jup not only carried a short note, but what was almost as welcome to Mrs. Woudbe as her casket of jewels could have been, the box of letters.

The dinner hour having passed without a summons to Rosa, or any notice taken of her billet to Mrs. Woudbe, inclosing the balance of the fifty pounds received from her, after deducting what was due according to agreement, every moment's stay in a house where she was shunned by the family, and neglected by the domestics, became more irksome than the last.

She had now as little confidence in the honour as in the humanity of her two patronesses; and, therefore, as the arrangement of her journey from a place to which she was a stranger, would in all probability depend on herself, it struck her, as the afternoon was fine,

fine, that, by walking to Denningcourt, she might learn every particular respecting the London stage, as well as reconnoitre the inn, where it was not unlikely she would be obliged to wait its passing; accordingly, having dressed herself in the black habit Mrs. Feverham called old and rusty, she left Mrs. Woudbe's "heaven."

She had scarce turned into the serpentine walk, before a maid servant overtook her with a letter. "Our folks are all so comical," said the girl, "that none of the men would carry your letter up, though it lay on the steward's table all day. Lord! as sure as death, there's Parson Brudenel and Lady Louisa! if they meet me, I shall lose my place."

Rosa, as little desirous of an interview with any of the family as the maid, turned into one path as she returned to the house by the other; and anxious to avoid notice, walked a considerable way before she observed the superscription of the letter was in the hand-writing of the now detestable "H. Montreville."

All

All her blood rushed to her face—the letter was thrown on the ground, and trod on; then recollecting that as it was addressed to her, however odious the contents, whoever picked it up would suppose it belonged to her;—no, she would tear it to atoms. In that moment the major's red coat, who, like other “home-keeping youths,” passed his hours in “shapeless idleness,” appearing through the foliage, suspended the fate of the unfortunate letter; she hastily put it in her pocket, and hurried on, till entering Denningcourt park, she saw the village before her, and reflecting that she was again on the point of becoming an helpless, unprotected wanderer, in a world where she might not find relation or friend, her mind became so sadly occupied, that she no longer thought of Mrs. Woudbe or her letter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Proving that all Lords and Ladies are not exactly alike; and shewing a new friend with an old face.

IT was not possible for any two ladies of the same rank to differ more than her, whose roof our heroine was preparing to abandon, and her, by whose charming residence the path led to Denningcourt village.

Inborn greatness might, indeed, be expected, in a superior degree, to preside in the soul of the latter, as she was the only remaining child of the Duke of Athelane, a nobleman, who inherited, from a long line of ancestry, the honour as well as title of his distinguished

tinguished predecessors. The election of Lady Elinor, his lovely daughter would, it was reported, have been made in favour of a single life, had not the duke, who never recovered the double loss of a beloved wife and amiable son, by a domestic calamity, prevailed on her to become Countess of Denningcourt, a short time previous to his death.

But although the misfortune that eventually deprived the young lady of both her parents, saddened the sweet expression of every feature in her mild countenance; though joy was banished from her heart, and love's inverted torch withered every blossom of delight in her bosom, her whole conduct was regulated by native honour, dignity of soul, and meek forbearance; no jarring atom formed a particle in her whole system;—she had not even the idea of malignity or ill humour; and never was sense so just and refined, adorned by a simplicity so artless and graceful:—her countenance bore the immediate mark of whatever sentiment or motion her heart felt; and though the unobtrusive virtues and accomplishments, which endeared her to the good, and

and extorted respect from the bad, were often clouded by deep and pensive thought ; though like the lone bird of night, she vented the plaints of her overcharged heart in solitude and melancholy ; yet as her thoughts were innocent, her brow was serene, and she fulfilled every duty of a virtuous wife, and supported her high rank in society with the grace, ease, and hospitality peculiar to the noble stock from whence she descended ; in short, in the words of the wisest of men, " her ways were the ways of pleasantness, and all her paths were peace ;" and that " the heart of her husband did safely trust her," was proved by the disposition of his fortune, a short time before his death.

Lord Denningcourt was a widower at the time he became enamoured of Lady Elinor Athelane. His first lady was rich and well born, two qualities that, in the opinion of his parents whose choice she was, atoned for the deficiencies, mental and external, his lordship so eminently possessed in his second countess, and which, indeed, he had so sensibly felt the absence of, that, determining to let his

his only son, a youth of great promise, be the carver of his own happiness, he gave him a settled and liberal establishment before he attained his eighteenth year.

Lord Vallerton's prudence did not keep pace with his father's generosity ; he fell into the common error of young men who have too much of every thing ;—his friends were all of a contrary description,—they had too little. He had an established governor of such strict morals, that both my lord and his governor happening to cast the eye of desire on the same damsel, a challenge ensued, and the event might have been fatal, had not another pretty damsel started up, and so attracted one or other of the heroes, that peace was established. My lord hated cards, but as it was the fashion for young men of rank to play and to lose, he did both ;—he was naturally sober, and vastly averse to morning head-ache, but his companions had no pleasure equal to “drinking like the devil,”—so my lord was never sober :—his taste was not only for modest but delicate women ; but his income was saddled with annuities to those

whose favours he shared with half the town : he was just in principle ; but there were so many imperceptible ways of getting deeply in debt, that by the time his lordship came of age, he was a distressed man,—and those distresses coming to the ears of the Earl, he was sent for, heard a grave lecture on his thoughtless extravagance, which concluded with directions to send the aggregate of his debts to the steward, in order to their being immediately discharged.

My lord knew very little of the matter ; but his valet, who received and paid all for him, was very competent to the business ; and when the indulgent father gave a check on his banker for twenty - two thousand pounds to clear old debts, my lord, his valet and friends, had the world before them, with fresh credit to begin anew.

Lord Vallerton was now at the head of every thing he did not like,—and out of the way of every thing he did. Lord Aron Horsemagog, some years indeed older than his lordship, but no less his particular friend, enlarged with wonderful eloquence on the de-
lights

lights of the turf—that Lord Vallerton had not yet tried—but he languished for something new—and his friend sold him such horses for the Newmarket-meetings, as, he swore, could never lose a race;—but such as, it was proved, could never win one: and, in four years, the Earl of Denningcourt was again informed of his son's distresses, and again, after a lecture, they were relieved, to the amount of forty-seven thousand pounds:—the lecture, however, was no longer on the thoughtless extravagance of youth; its subject was dishonourable and profligate pursuits, and the scandal which rested on the character of a man of honour who assented with, and became the prey of sharpers, however high the rank such men disgraced; and who, unhappily insensible to the enchantment of female virtue, was, in the very moment of voluptuousness, but the slave of those slaves to many, who were ready to sacrifice him to the next comer.

Lord Vallerton blushed,—he felt the truth of all his father said; he could not deny there were friends, in whom there was no honour,

honour ; and women, in whom there was no faith ; all his lordship contended for was, an exception in favour of *his* friends and *his* women ; as that exception, however, was precisely the one the earl was least disposed to grant, the conference did not end quite cordially ; but as the debts were paid, that ceased to be of importance.

From this time the Earl was more attentive to his son's mode of life ; and although his heart did the fullest justice to the charms of Lady Denningcourt, he could not help acknowledging that the system of governing children as practised by his own parents, even to the joining them unsuitably in wedlock, was less dangerous than that he had himself adopted ; but it was in vain he now endeavoured to repair his error, by resuming the authority he had resigned ; the reproaches and threats, which resulted from his acquaintance with the prodigality of his son, were liberties *one gentleman* had no right to take with *another* ; so, at least, thought Lord Valler-ton, and the friends he consulted :—there was, of course, no submission on one side ;

no concessions on the other; the son was again distressed, and the father irascible;—but he once more paid the debts, and solemnly abjured the offender for ever.

It was indeed time for the Earl to be either angry or prudent; he had paid upwards of an hundred thousand pounds for his son, besides an allowance of two thousand pounds a year; and as his personal property was principally that which he received with his last lady, and having always lived in an expensive magnificent style, he must else soon have been a distressed man himself;—it happening, about this time, that the countess was in an ill state of health, he retired with her to his castle, where he gratified his resentment against his son, by cutting down all the timber, breaking entails, and, finally, devising every shilling of property in his power, to the countess.

The castle and a small heritable estate, being unalienable, he new-built the jointure-house, and was employed in decorating and furnishing it, purposing to remove every thing, but the actual heir looms, from the ancient residence of the family, when he was seized

seized with a fit of the gout, to which he was subject, and expired in six hours.

Lady Denningcourt possessed the confidence of her lord when living, as entire as his fortune when dead ; he left her wholly unrestrained in her future conduct, except in regard to his son,—to whom he absolutely forbid her, as she respected his memory, to give up any part of the property he devised to her, not even at her death, except he should be then married, and, by having become a father himself, learned how to appreciate the parental indulgence he had so much abused :—his lordship had also verbally requested her to make the house, which he had been so anxious to compleat, her principal residence during her life.

The young Earl's conduct, when, after the removal of the countess from the castle, he took possession of that and the small demesne which devolved to him, was ill-calculated to conciliate the favour of the dowager, since, to the scandal of the neighbourhood, he brought thither a mistress, who, judging of her as by his former connections, might very

naturally be supposed to accompany him in the obscurity which his own ill conduct merited, in order to be “in at the death” of all his remaining property.

The old furniture and family plate were heir-looms of the castle; but all the modern ornaments were removed to the jointure-house which Rosa was now approaching.

There was a sublimity as well as grandeur, in the *tout ensemble* of this elegant building, that struck the beholder with admiration, and it was surrounded by such a coincidence of objects, that it might be well stiled the mansion of peace:—it stood on a gentle eminence, but did not command so extensive and various a prospect as was seen from every part of Delworth-house.

The grand entrance to the best apartments was by a flight of steps, under a colonade, supported by lofty marble pillars; but there were in the suite of apartments beneath, comfort and convenience that rendered them favourites with the fair mistress of the mansion. The ceilings were not quite so lofty as the others, but the furniture and decorations equal,

equal, and the windows, all to the ground, opened to the park, from which nature's most lovely carpet in front, was only separated by a light chevaux de frise, with netting, to prevent the deer and a few favourite lambs, from injuring the fine flowers, which, in china vases, were arranged in front of the house, intermixed with a variety of birds of beautiful song and plumage.

The grand eating saloon, a breakfast, a music and billiard rooms; a ladies and a gentlemen's library, with an elegant boudoir at each end, were at once visible to the eye of the passengers, who were allowed to go through the park.

Rosa gazed not only at the beautiful apartments, as she passed them, but at the happy beings, for so she thought they must be, who inhabited them; and though good manners might rather be said to be a part of her natural disposition, than an acquirement from education, she could not help stopping to indulge a sensation, that had something more affecting in it than mere curiosity, while observing a lady who was reading in the boudoir,

and who presently left it with her book in her hand; Rosa dropped a low involuntary courtesy, though conscious of its not being observed.

The lady stopped a moment, as she passed the library, speaking to a gentleman who was writing there, in an accent so mild and harmonious, as vibrated on the ear of attention, and then went on, Rosa slowly following, the chevaux de frise only dividing her from the object of her admiration, who again stopped at the second library, where three ladies were assembled, one of whom was tuning her harp, a second drawing, and the third netting.

The lady again stopped, and entered into a short conversation with the group, whose smiling countenances announced the ease of their hearts, while Rosa, fearful of giving offence, passed slowly on.

Deeply sighing, as she proceeded, every new object adding to her admiration; "Oh!" cried she, "had heaven ordained such an asylum for me!—all here must be purity and benevolence,—for here dwelt the respectable foundress

foundress of those monuments of urbanity, now full in her view, as explained by Lady Gauntlet."

The lady, who had left her friends, and proceeded with a quickened pace toward the further boudoir, again stopped, and the silver tones of her still harmonious, but more dulcet voice, was addressed, in soothing accents, to those within ;—she seemed to sooth,—she strove to comfort ; her efforts, not succeeding, became more faint,—she turned, weeping, from the boudoir into an orangery, which adjoined it.

" Alas !" cried Rosa, " how impossible is it to judge of this strange world ! here, in the bosom of tranquility, the tear of anguish is seen to flow,—even that interesting woman is not exempt from sorrow."

Coming now to the front of the boudoir, she beheld a female figure, apparently young, reclining her head on a pillow which an elderly woman supported ; a greyhound lay at her feet, and her eyes were fixed on the ground, totally inattentive to the endeavours of two women to amuse her, though they

dressed a lamb in a fantastical manner with flowers, for that purpose.

What did not Rosa feel at that moment ! why did her bosom swell ! why did her tears flow ! she could not envy a being who, visited by sickness or misfortune, beheld the enchanting scene that so affected her, with apathy.

Envy was a stranger to the bosom of the Beggar: a sensation of tenderness overwhelmed her :—this was, perhaps, the daughter, the sister, the friend of the good and charitable Lady Denningcourt ; for her, she persuaded herself, it was she had seen. Oh ! how precious the tears of such a woman ! she who administered comfort to age ; who gave to sickness a bed of ease,—to infancy an asylum :—Oh how soothing must her sympathy be ; how more than happy those to whom it was extended ; even the menial domestics of Lady Denningcourt, must feel the blessings of her good acts, dropping like manna from heaven ! blessings, alas ! which she could never hope to share.

She

She had now passed the house ; her low spirits were accompanied by a nervous irritability ; and though it was only the greyhound that left the boudoir, leaped the chevaux de frise and ran after her, she was frightened and fell.

Her scream reached the three ladies and the gentleman, who all hastened through a low green gate, almost hid by trees, to her assistance, and were, no doubt, astonished to see a beautiful young woman in a *rusty black* riding habit, almost senseless on the ground, with the greyhound jumping on her, and licking her hands and face.

“ Dido, Dido, here, here, Dido” cried a female voice.

Rosa started up,—she was seized with a nervous affection ; she shrieked, wept, caressed the dog, and pressed him to her heart.

“ Dido, Dido,” again cried the woman. “ Dido, Dido,” was repeated in a weaker voice.

Rosa shrieked ; the persons calling Dido approached ; but Dido’s name no longer reverberated from the abode of tranquility, nor

was it the alternate screams and sobs of Rosa that was now heard.

The young person, at whose feet the greyhound lay, had, with one of her attendants, anxiously pursued him : the creature was infinitely dear to her—she followed it ; and the moment she saw Rosa, her shrieks rent the air.

The gentleman was alarmed—the ladies terrified ; at length changing shrieks to deep and hollow groans, “Rosa ! my Rosa ! my dear own, own Rosa, ah ! how I have longed for this !” sounded from her bloodless lips ; and our heroine found the emaciated form of the once happy and ever dear Elinor in her arms.

“The goodness of goodness have mercy upon me,” cried her attendant, the loquacious Mrs. Betty Brown, if here be’nt my Miss fainted quite away, and the lost sheep found ! How do you do, Mistress Rosa ? what, don’t you know me ? I think, by your parrel, you need not be very proud ; for my part, I should be ashamed to appear in our

stuart's room in such a shabby-genteel dress."

The Duke of Athelane, whom Rosa saw in the library, sent another of Elinor's women for a gentleman of the faculty, who, with a very liberal salary, was retained in the house: he removed Elinor to the boudoir; and as he insisted on every person's retiring, an elderly woman who under his directions constantly watched her excepted, the duke invited Rosa into the room the ladies had left.

Had every being Rosa ever knew, not excepting Mr. Montreville, been present, she would have had neither eyes, ears, nor a thought to bestow on any but Elinor: she entreated, in the most earnest and passionate terms, permission to attend her dear friend, her companion, the sister of her heart.

" You hear, me'in," said one of the ladies, " the doctor interdicts all company."

" The doctor," replied Rosa, her eyes bathed in tears, " knows not how dear we are to each other. My poor Elinor! her

mind, I know, is not changed with her person."

"That is, indeed, changed," said the duke, in an accent of pity.

"I think, me'm," said the same lady, "we have seen you before."

Rosa now looked round; and, to her unspeakable astonishment, beheld Lady Hopely and the two ladies she chaproned at Mrs. Woudbe's masked-ball, whose recollection of her were far less favourable than hers of them; but though the satirical glance of Miss Bruce, as she spoke, might, in other circumstances have confounded Rosa, she was at this moment so much interested, and so anxious to obtain permission to see Elinor, that, forgetting the coldness of the amiable countess, to whom she was so much obliged, the last and only time she had seen her in London, and remembering only her kindness at Edinburgh, she instantly addressed her, imploring her to obtain, from the friends of the poor invalid, permission for her to be admitted to her.

Lady

Lady Hopely was moved by her tears; but the peculiar circumstance under which she had first known her, and the suspicious ones in which they had since met, as well as the delicate situation of the young lady, repelled her natural wish to dispense happiness; she was therefore silent, and Miss Bruce returned to the attack.

“ You don’t say, me’m, whether I am mistaken;—I think you live with that amiable woman, ‘Mrs. Woudbe?’”

Rosa bowed.

“ Yes, I think you was her double at the masked-ball. Upon my honour, I thought you had great merit there;—it was a post of some danger, as well as fatigue.”

A wedding, a presentation, a new fashion, and an elopement, are subjects that interest most young women of fashion. Miss Angus, as lively as Miss Bruce, and far more good-natured, could not help joining the conversation.

“ You are going, we hear, to have a grand wedding at Delworth?”

Rosa,

Rosa, who had been seated by the Duke, again bowed.

"A ball al fresco," continued Miss Angus.

"Oh, yes!" rejoined Miss Bruce—"quite a famous thing! you will have a great number of visitants in *masks*, I fancy;—you are not much fatigued with bare faces in this country."

"I wonder," said Miss Angus, "how that model, of every thing extraordinary, Lady Gauntlet, can exist in such a solitude?"

"You, me'm," cried Miss Bruce, with a broad stare from her dull, insipid eye, "are, however, amused vastly well, I dare say;—Lord Delworth is very gallant, and the major quite the thing."

"So fully and so well employed," joined Lady Hopely, rising, "you would have very little time to spare for our poor invalid, notwithstanding she was, as we understand, your school companion."

Her ladyship immediately quitted the apartment as she uttered the last word, followed by the Duke.

"Pray,

"Pray, me'm," and Miss Bruce politely turned her back as she spoke, "where was it you had the good fortune to be schoolmate with Miss Athelane?"

"Miss Athelane!" repeated Rosa. But the letter she had received from Elinor immediately recurring to her memory, and with it the several circumstances of her removal from Doctor Croak's, she concluded that either Lady Denningcourt or one of her friends was the relation under whose protection Elinor now was; she also, in that instant, remembered the particular injunction of her friend, not to let the name of Buanun escape her; and fear, least Lady Hopely might mention her connection with the major's family, blunted every shaft from the malignity of Miss Bruce, to whose mercy she was now left, as Miss Angus was sent for by the Duke.

"What are you surprised at?" continued Miss Bruce;—"but perhaps you did not know her by the name of Athelane? I suppose—" and she eyed the rusty black habit with as scrutinizing a glance as Betty herself could

could have done—"I suppose either your friend has risen, or you fallen very considerably, since you were school companions;—but I should like to know what fine seminary qualified you for a place in Mrs. Woudbe's family arrangements?"

Poor Miss Bruce had as good a disposition to abuse Miss Athelane, as to mortify our heroine;—perhaps, indeed, had she not been restrained by certain private considerations, the former might have predominated, since, in her, a new rival had started out of the lap of mystery, more dangerous than she once thought Kattie Buanun, as the Duke made no secret of his wish to unite his nephew, Mr. Angus, to this new-found favourite, whereas the latter could not have provoked her malignant satire by any thing but her extraordinary beauty.

Rosa blushed deeply: she had, in the recent discovery of Mrs. Woudbe's character, a solution of the disesteem in which that intriguing matron was held; and the proof that Lady Gauntlet was privy to her abandoned conduct, also suggested, that the dearth of

of company at Delworth, and of private visitors in Portman-square, resulted from the same cause.

But, besides that, she was in the moment racking her invention for means to prevent Lady Hopely from communicating circumstances poor Elinor had been so anxious to conceal; there was the appearance of such sapience of understanding, blended with the spiteful and unprovoked ill humour of Miss Bruce, that, considering “the blindness of the understanding, as much to be pitied as the blindness of the eye; that there is neither jest nor guilt in the person who loses their way in either,” she rather felt sorry for, than angry at her attacks.

But as she was as little disposed to vindicate as to expose Mrs. Woudbe, it was as difficult to answer the broad hints against her, without doing away the other, as at all to justify herself; she therefore simply answered, that her acquaintance commenced with the young lady she had so accidentally met, at a boarding-school in the country, kept by one of the best of women; whose——”

“What,

“What, Harley!” interrupted Miss Bruce, “or some such name? she who is always teasing us with letters, and who, indeed, appears to me to be as mad as her pupil.”

“Mad!” repeated Rosa, with emotion; “I hope, madam, I have no marks of insanity?”

“You! no, no; and yet, now I recollect, what the deuce did you mean by hugging the old greyhound?—the odious thing is quite a nuisance; and I have often wondered Lady Denningcourt would humour her niece by keeping it—it has really hardly strength to crawl;—nothing can be a stronger proof of the derangement of her little senses than fondness for such an animal.”

“Ah, madam!” cried Rosa, with pale and breathless anxiety, “what do you say? deranged! has such a calamity befallen my dear Elinor?”

“It certainly has,” replied the unfeeling Miss Bruce, and shrugging her shoulders,—“yet, notwithstanding that, we want to make a duchess of her—but it won’t do; the girl is well enough; they cry up her innocence, sweet temper,

temper, and all that—but it won't do; there are people in the world on whom polished metal of inferior value will pass better than rough gold—and Angus is one of them;—besides, to suppose such a charming fellow as that will ever marry a maniac, is a famous joke, even if he were weary of the forward, bold thing he keeps."

Miss Bruce always spoke before she began thinking; and no young lady from the north of Tweed could say more nothings in a given time than herself.

The subject she had now entered on, was an everlasting one; it was Mr. Angus and the dukedom.

Rosa eagerly listened: she no longer thought of restraining Lady Hopely's communications.

The part of Miss Bruce's conversation, which she comprehended was interesting in the highest degree. Miss Bruce was proceeding, when she also was sent for; and the servant had but just closed one door after her, before Mrs. Brown entered at another.

Rosa

Rosa arose with alacrity; she now saw before her the person whose care and professions of kindness had left a lasting impression on her heart, and to whom she had given credit for integrity and good meanings, enough to excuse the weakness and often folly of her conduct; her white arms were expanded ready to encircle the neck on which, in childhood, she had often hung; but the heart that never shared in her caresses, further than interest led, was now absent, from the same motives.

"How do you do, Mrs. Rosa?" said she, with an air of the most settled composure, and seating herself, nodded to a chair.

Rosa first stared in astonishment, and then, notwithstanding the aching solicitude she felt for Elinor, could not help laughing at the state of the expecting, my lady duchess's woman.

"I am glad to see you so merry, Mrs. Rosa," said Betty;—"your dress is so shabby, (and she drew a pink belt, which fastened her fine muslin gown, tighter) that really I thought what was bred in the bone would never

never get out of the flesh ;—to be sure, ashes to ashes, and dirt to dirt, all the world over ; but then, as you have had such good larning, why a body should think as you mought get a liven ; for as I told you in my letter, when land and money is gone and spent, then larning is most excellent ;—but howsever, as I say, every body is not born with silver spoons in their mouths ; and though I wisit at Lord Gauntlet's, I am sure the least of my thoughts was to find you there along with that lady, as Mrs. Modely, and she is our Stuart's cousin, les is'nt a lady born ;—though she do give grand balls, where owr young ladies went when we was in London——”

“ Betty, my dear Betty,” interrupted Rosa—

“ Mrs. Brown, if you please, Mrs. Rosa ; and I assure you, every body used to call me so when I kept a house of my own, only that poor ignorant man, my husbent, would always let you call me Betty, because, poor, fappy Tony, he said, as we wus no better, nor wus then sarvents to his master ; but the case

cafe is quite altered, for now I never wets my fingers; and please God, I shall have good fortune; for a gypsey——”

“ Dear, Mrs. Brown, do answer me,” said Rosa;—“ I don’t ask if Lady Denningcourt be the lady who took my Elinor from Doctor Croak’s—that I understand; but only tell me how long she has been ill, and what is her malady?”

“ Oh, Lord, Miss!—Mrs. Rosa I mean,” and Betty having carefully examined whether there were any listeners near the key-hole of the doors, shut them—“ have not you heard? why she is mad!”

“ Oh, God in his mercy forbid!” and Rosa’s pale cheeks accorded with the exclamation.

“ True as you are alive, Miss—Mrs. Rosa—as mad as a March hare;—and here we have got a mad doctor and a mad nuss. Poor dear! she is so glad when the old woman, just for a moment, leaves her and me together.”

“ Oh, dear girl! I can divine the fatal cause.”

“ Not

“ Not you indeed, Mrs. Rosa—not if you had seven years, and seven to that: I am sure I never inspected it myself; and so I told his Grace, upon my bended knees, when he found it out.”

“ And what did his Grace find out?”

“ Why, Miss, he found out as that ragamuffin feller, Jack Croak, got our stuart, a very well-spoken, portly man he is, to hire him for a footman; and at last, I knoed no more of it than the man in the moon, he got Miss Elinor away in a postchaise; and, by God’s marcy, the Duke had been to his castle in Scotland—a fine place our stuart says it is; and as he was coming back to my lady, who should he meet but Jack Croak and Miss;—well, I never shall forget it the longest day I have to live, when I went to get her up in the morning; there was the nest, but the bird was flown,—and I trembled like a naspen leaf when I went to tell my lady;—and oh, dear, dear, what a house we had. My lady did nothen but wring her hands, and say her prayers. Ah, Miss—Mrs. I should say—you may well cry; for, to be
sure,

sure, my suffrens was great—I expected every minute to be turned out of door."

Though Betty had not betrayed the smallest mark of sensibility at meeting with Rosa, she did not want sympathy in certain cases.

Rosa wept for Elinor—Betty for herself.

" Ah!" cried Rosa, " I foreboded."

" You mean, Mrs. Rosa, you afterboded it, I suppose,—and after-wits is poor stuff; for I defy Satan himself to have inspected such a thing—as Jack Croak's being at our house, one of our footmen, and me not find him out;—though, indeed, except our own footman in the Stuart's room, we ladies' women never speak to them inferior servants, much less to inspect, as Miss Elinor would go for to make a napkin of a duster;—and then, as our butler said, when I told him as Jack stole money from his father's servant, ' why, says he, 'tis a wonder I have got all my plate;’—and so it was, Miss—don't you think so?"

" Not exactly; but pray go on:—the Duke met them, you say, and knew?"

" He

“He knew Miss Elinor at first glance, just as they passed the gate at that place where the smith lives as marries all the folks; but then, that fool Jack might have got away as easy as a glove, and his Grace would have known nothing about him; but there he hung to the wheels of the carriage, and cried; and when the groom dragged him away, throed himself on the ground, and then Mr. Maclane, the Duke’s gentleman, remembered him.”

“Poor fellow!”

“Lord! Mistress Rosa, how can yon pity such a scapegrace, as had like to turn me out of my place; I am sure hanging is too good for him. However, back they brought poor Miss Elinor, more like a ghost nor a christian; and my lady, stead of flying out as Madam Bawsky would have done, was as meek as a lamb; and, stead of scolding, axed Miss Elinor’s pardon for letting her live so long with Doctor Croak.”

“Amiable, respectable Lady Denning-court!”

" You may well say that, Mistress Rosa; for God knows, she is fit for nothen but the kingdom of heaven;—high and low, rich and poor—'tis all one; every body loves her, and she can't shew her nose in the village, but what folk are ready to throw her down with blessings; but, however, to make short of the story, Jack was sent—I don't know where he was sent, but if ever he comes here again, I believe old Croak will pay off all scores. Lord, Mistress Rosa, only think what long scores I got owed to me at Penry—a poor, mean place, now—would you believe?"

" But how did Elinor bear—"

" Bear! why I told you before, she could not bear—she run mad:—first, she neither eat nor drank—and then she never spoke, and at last she stared and stormed; I was afraid to go near her. My lady took her to London, and then to the great Doctor that cures every body; and they all wanted her to let Miss stop with them—and that would have been a sad thing; for then, you know, Miss, I must have lost my place; but my lady

lady said, no, she would never part with her."

"Oh, Mrs. Brown! what would I not give to be as happy as you!"

"Why, to be sure, Miss, I wants for nothing;—and if I could but hear for sartain that poor John Brown was laid in his peaceful grave, why (and Mrs. Brown bridled) I might be very comfortable; for our stuart is worth a power of money, and he—"

"Heavens, Betty! what are you saying? have you lost both your senses and your principles?"

"Lord, Mistress Rosa! no—I tell you it is poor Miss Elinor who have lost her senses. So, then, you see, when my lady found as all the doctors could do, only cured her of her obstroppeness, and left her as moping and mollancholly as a cat, she hired a doctor and a nuss—a poor, fat, lazy, old creature as ever lived—to come down here; but, poor sole, she is fell away to a skelleton; and now, after poor Dido—you remember old Dido, Miss Rosy?"

Mrs. Brown was now imperceptibly changing the Mistress Rosa to Miss Rosy.

“Remember her! yes, my dear Betty;—now you call me Rosy, I may again call you Betty; and I remember Mr. John Brown, good John Brown, your husband—he is worth a thousand stewards;—sure you would be glad to see him.”

“Not I, Miss Rosy—not I, I assure you; for, poor man, you know Miss, he is certainly dead, and I don’t want no acquaintance with any body after they are corpusses; besides, our stuart—But pray, Miss, how camed you to leave that major’s lady? I suppose you was too stomachful to wait on her after the gentleman died; but that was all frippery nonsense; for, you see, though I kept a house of my own—oh, geminigig! there’s my bell, and I must run. However, Mistress Rosa, if you pass this way again, and come round to tother front, ring the stuart’s bell, and ask for me—for Mrs. Brown—and you will be made as welcome as flowers in May. Oh, Lord! there’s the bell again.”

“Betty,

"Betty, Betty, stay one moment;—can't I see Elinor?"

"Oh dear! I don't know—there's the bell again—and that old nuss owes me a grudge—I must be gone;”—and away ran Mrs. Brown.

Rosa was again alone—her heart now palpitating with hope she would be allowed to see the dear afflicted girl, for whom she had so sincere and ardent an affection, and now sinking with fear at she knew not what, besides the possibility that she might be banished this terrestrial Eden, and never more behold her Elinor. It was full half an hour before she heard a foot stir; at length the door was thrown open by a servant, and the Duke of Athelane entered.

C H A P. VIII.

"At length Sancho said to his master, Please, Sir, to ask Mr. Ape, whether the affair of the cave be true? for, beggining your worship's pardon, I don't believe a word of it.

"The monkey being accordingly consulted, the answer was, that *part* was *true*, and *part* *false*."

THE Duke of Athelane was neither young nor handsome; but he was, what is superior to either, sensible and well-informed: his air was grand, his countenance open, and his demeanour courteous; he was not ashamed of being a slave to honour, though he had power to seal the lip of censure; and tho' independent in his spirit and fortune, had not learned

learned, by a contempt of fame, to despise virtue. He united the two opposite characters of courtier and patriot, in a manner that secured the respect of the sovereign, and the love of the people; men of sense were proud to quote his opinion—men of honour to follow his example.

He succeeded his brother to the ducal honours and estate, in default of male issue; and never having been married, had, by agreement between the late duke and himself, at a great expence, both of money and interest, procured a grant from the crown for the title to pass, with the estate, to Mr. Angus, son of his sister, the only male descendant of the elder branch of the ancient family of the Athelanes.

Lady Denningcourt was endeared to him, by her beauty, her virtues, and her early and almost unprecedented misfortunes; and it may be no digression here to acknowledge, that Elinor's surmise was just: It was by a maternal right she was claimed from Doctor Croak.

Lady Elinor Athelane was the essence of harmony in body and soul: her brother inherited from his race all the indignant sense of honour which distinguished the brave Scotch chieftans, when, impatient of delay, they seized the power of avenging their own wrong, without waiting the tardy executioner of the law. Noble he was, and noble were his fires: he was the pride of his country, the honour of his family, and the champion of the injured wherever he met them—a terrible foe, a faithful and unwearied friend. My son, said his father, in delivering his own sentiments, thinks so or so; my son, said the fond exulting mother, acts thus, or thus; my brother, said the dove-like sister,—oh! if ever I love, it must be a man like my brother.

And such a man there was.

A youth of her mother's clan was the chosen companion of the Marquis of Dungaron: their spirits were congenial; their forms eminently fine; their features handsome; and their manners naturally elegant: their tastes, pursuits, and amusements, were

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the same; till the power which conquers all, broke the sweet bond of amity, and blasted every bud of hope.

Lady Elinor, who, with her mother, had resided the last three years in the south, for the benefit of masters superior to those to be procured in the north, at one glance, decided the destiny of the two friends.—Unconscious of the fatal consequences of that passion which, even according to holy writ, “is as strong as death, which many waters cannot quench, nor floods drown,” indulging the sweet bent of her gentle disposition to confer happiness, she thought not of the precipice on which she stood, nor doubted the honour of him whose soul was dear as her own.

The youth had no inheritance but the sword of his ancestors, unstained by an act of dishonour: Lady Elinor’s fortune would be immense; and she was betrothed by her father to an English peer of the first rank. Poor Elinor! this was a fatal bar to her lover’s hope, of which she never thought, while the graceful youth knelt at her feet,

impressed burning kisses on her hand, and washed them with his tears, till the Duke tore the fond bandage from their eyes, by informing them of what reason, had they not been too much in love to attend to her dictates, might have told them long before, that, however congenial their minds, acres of land and thousands of guineas, formed an impassable mountain to obstruct their union.

The lover's genius was high, his soul daring, and his love unconquerable; but he was poor, and could not dare ask one of the first and richest dukes in Scotland to forego his promise, and break his sacred word in favour of an indigent relation.

Elinor, who was as mild as diffident, and as dutiful as fond, fainted away when the duke spoke of the honourable alliance he had formed for her: he attributed her emotion to the excessive delicacy of her mind, and was too much satisfied with the treaty to observe its effect on the companion of his son. The future settlement of the young pair had brought on an intimacy between the marquis and the daughter of the same

family; he also became passionately enamoured; his parents approved; his heart bounded with transport; and his impatience to hasten the two-fold nuptials, could be only equalled by the torturing anxiety of the fair Elinor to avoid it.

The young man, who could not conceal and who dared not avow his passion, prevailed on his father to command his absence from Athelane for a short time: this was acceded to with reluctance; and he set off, not to enter his paternal home, but to hide in the caverns on the Athelane estate, which had formerly received bands of warriors, there to watch the footsteps of the wretched Elinor, to woo her to his retreats, to assail her with all the tenderness of a first passion, and all the frenzy of deep despair.

The English lover at length visited Athelane: he was received with hospitable splendour; he sat at the right-hand of the duchess, and was attended to with the nicest respect by the duke, and the most friendly warmth by the Marquis; but the lovely daughter, pale, and cold as marble, partook neither of the

joy of her friends, nor the rapture of her admirer.

Lord Cheltenham felt all the desire, but none of the sensibilities of true love; he was handsome and accomplished, nor was he by any means insensible of his own merit; he could not believe the cold reception he received from Lady Elinor was, as the duchess hinted, the mere effect of delicacy, and became first suspicious, then watchful; Lady Elinor was neither; her secret interviews with the beloved cousin were therefore soon betrayed.

Lord Cheltenham's wounded pride and disappointed passion, were not to be appeased with any thing less than exposure of the woman who could prefer an indigent relation to a coronet; he led the noble open-hearted Dungaron to a cavern, the entrance to which was shaded by thick underwood, and blasted every youthful hope, by coldly and scornfully pointing to Lady Elinor enjoying that repose in her lover's arms, which she courted in vain on her pillow.

" For

“ For this,” said Lord Cheltenham, “ was I invited to Athelane? and was I, but for this fortunate discovery, destined to marry a wanton? But think not, my Lord Marquis, Lady Altmeria Cheltenham will ally herself to dishonour—here must our family treaty end—patch up the affair as you please—except to my sister, the disgrace shall rest with me.”

There needed not the goad of disappointed love to urge the Marquis of Dungaron’s rage, at a sight so appalling to honour and friendship; the sister he adored, the friend he loved, confederates in the dishonour of his name, and the ruin of his peace.

“ Wretch! villain!” he cried, flying on them like an hungry lion on his prey, and twisting his ruthless hand in the golden tresses of the gentle, terrified Lady Elinor, he dragged her from the encircling arms of his once favoured friend.

“ She is my wife! my lord!” said he.

“ Die, traitor! hypocrite! and, with the base lye in thy throat, face the God of truth.”

The marquis had now seized on the unarmed youth with one hand, and drew his dirk with the other.

The frantic Elinor rushed before its point. "Ah, my brother!" said she, tears streaming from her mild eyes, "what would you do? will Athelane's heir become an assassin!"

The furious marquis spurned her from him; and glancing in that fatal moment his furious eyes round the cavern, saw a pair of pistols lying on a projecting stone, brought there by the unhappy lover.

The marquis seized them with implacable rage. "Coward! scoundrel! lurking, mean villain!" What was it of raging passion he did not utter!

Lady Elinor again knelt at his feet; again he spurned her.

"If," cried the marquis, foaming with rage, and offering one of the pistols, "thou dare face thy injured friend, and ill-requited benefactor——"

"Oh, for mercy! my brother, my dear brother!" and Lady Elinor once more prostrated herself.

In his attempt to raise her, the lover accidentally fell himself; and in that situation received a personal insult too degrading for manhood. Forbearance was no more—the pistol was accepted and discharged—the combatants both fell, and Elinor's shrieks rent the air.

The woodmen heard her—the family were alarmed—the duke and duchess flew to the spot. Unhappy parents! their pride, their hope, their only son, was expiring; he could only articulate enough to charge himself with all the blame of the fatal deed, before he breathed his last on the bosom that gave him birth. The bleeding body of his opponent was not suffered to enter the castle; it was carried to a neighbouring cottage, where his father, to whose more humble heart he was not less dear than the Marquis of Dungaron to his, arrived the same evening; and being considered as an accessory with his son, was obliged to accept the assistance of the friends of his own clan, to escape by sea the revenge vowed against him by the more powerful clan

of

of Athelane ; and in a fishing-vessel, brought as near as the coast would admit, he, with two faithful adherents, reached the coast of France, carrying with him his wounded and almost lifeless son.

The duchess never spoke after her son expired ; and the Duke, unable to support himself under such a double calamity, was reduced to the last extremity. The coffins of his adored wife and beloved son were, by his order, though soldered up, kept in state to wait for his own ; and the castle resembled more a receptacle for the dead than the seat of magnificent hospitality.

In the general wreck, Elinor, the gentle tender delicate Elinor, only retained fortitude and strength to watch every turn in the duke's disorder ; but the price of his pardon was an oath never to behold the murderer of a mother, whose virtue adorned her high rank ; of a son, who was the hope of his country.

Life would have been a poor sacrifice, in the dutiful Elinor's estimation, to procure the pardon and peace of her now only parent ;

but

but a tie more dear than life bound her to the wretched exile.

According to the laws of Scotland, which do not require a church ceremony to validate a marriage, or legitimate the offspring of an acknowledged union, Lady Elinor was, in her own estimation, a wife, and knew she would also be a mother.

She prostrated herself before her father, and hiding her face, made the avowal, which had nearly been as fatal to him, as his son's death to her mother.

Some estates and great personals were vested in Lady Elinor and her issue, on the demise of the marquis without heir; and the idea that the destroyer of his son, or any of his race, should benefit by the calamity he had caused, threw him into agonies, in which it was feared he would expire: he became delirious, heaping curses on his lovely daughter, and calling down the vengeance of heaven on the murderer of his son.

Such was the miserable state of the Athelane family, when news, on unquestionable authority, was brought to the castle, that the

the unfortunate offender had swallowed poison.

Groaning under the heavy weight of a father's curse, which she could not deprecate without staining her soul with deeper guilt, without abjuring a husband more unfortunate than criminal, and depriving the unborn of its native rights; the unburied body of her dear loved mother, brought, broken-hearted, to an untimely end; the handsome, noble Malcolm, ever mourned, and ever before her; every feeling of her soul lacerated with hopeless grief, Lady Elinor was the less shocked at the deplorable end of him who was the cause of all, as it removed the grand obstacle to her father's retracting his malediction.—She could dare to rush into his presence, press his burning hand to her trembling lips, wash it with tears of penitence, and call heaven and all the host of angels to witness the unlimited obedience she would in future pay her dear father, if heaven, in compassion to her miseries, would spare him to bless and protect her.

Her

Her piety, her penitence, and prayers, were accepted: The duke lived to bless and forgive her; he led her in sad procession to attend his noble wife and son, when carried in funeral pomp to the mausoleum of his ancestors, and there heard her vow of unlimited obedience repeated, amid the sighs and tears of all the House of Athelane.

After the last obsequies, he immediately left his castle; and determining the child, of which his daughter was pregnant, should, from its birth, be an alien to his family, country and fortune, set off, by easy stages, to England, from whence he intimated his intention to go abroad.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, the person who attended the late duchess during her confinements, both as nurse and midwife, was his only confidant in the affair he had so much at heart; the bond on her secrecy was her attachment to his family; the reward of it an annuity for life; and having been sent privately to the south some days before he left Athelane, she had already succeeded in her mission, which was to take a ready-furnished

nished house, within a certain distance of London, and hire two English female domestics, ready to receive Lady Elinor, before they reached the metropolis.

So far Mrs. Moggy McLaurin was in the duke's secret: She met him at Hatfield, whence, leaving his carriages and attendants to proceed to London, a hack chaise carried them across the country, to a small, lone house within three miles of Penry, where he reminded his daughter of her vow of obedience, and informed her she was to remain till able to leave England.

Lady Elinor understood the cruel policy which was intended to rob her child of its birth-right; but always gentle and complying, as it was her nature to be, she was now too timid and broken-spirited ever to remonstrate; she knew her father's humanity, his pride, and generosity; he could not, consistent with either, abandon his own blood; and depending on a return of the fond indulgence which was now rather suspended than lost, she acquiesced, in hope that time, when it restored her father to himself, would also reunite

unite her to her child ; and when told that the favoured attendant of her dear mother was to be hers, she gratefully kissed the hand of her father, not without a secret hope that her child would also be committed to the same care.

With this good woman Lady Elinor might indulge in all the luxury of grief, free from the keen inquisition and reproachful glances of an offended and grieving parent, whose deep drawn sighs struck in daggers to her heart ; with her she might dare to blend grief for a husband with lamentation for a mother and brother ; and by her she was encouraged to hope, that her child would one day be the acknowledged heir of the Duke of Athelane ; for Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin protested the marriage was good, and of course the offspring legitimate.

The Duke's visits were frequent and short, but always *incog.* ; and as they were considered as a private family, they excited no curiosity in the neighbourhood.

The hatred borne by the duke to the name of him, from whom his son received his
death-

death-wound, was so far from being appeased by his self-destruction, that it swelled into irritation and revengeful ire, at the most distant probability of the fortune of his house descending to any of the detested race; and his unborn grandchild was, of course, abjured before its birth.

His scheme was to place it out of the knowledge of any part of his family; but, at the same time, where the handsome allowance he intended to make for it, should secure both justice and humanity. He had not yet met with any person in whom he chose to place a confidence which accorded with the dictates of his conscience, when, as Lady Elinor's time grew near, Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin suggested the necessity of having an accoucheur ready to assist her in case of danger.

The Duke, after many oblique enquiries, heard of Doctor Croak, and, resolving that care for his daughter should not impede the grand point, rode through Penry, where under pretence of a gouty complaint, he called on the doctor, who, with his *chere amie*, Mrs.

Bawsky,

Bawsky, was taking tea with every appearance of domestic comfort; and it instantly struck the duke that this man might answer the double purpose of attending his daughter, and adopting her child; he accordingly asked some few leading questions, gave the doctor a guinea, and took his measures accordingly.

It was now necessary he should make another half-confidant: - his coachman, who had been brought up in the Athelane stables, was obliged, in obedience to the commands of the duke, to return to one of his early stations, and drive, as postillion, a plain hired chaise and hack horses.

Doctor Croak, elated by the acquisition of a fair boarder, so well inclined to forward his interest and welfare, was in a delightful dream of advancement in life, when the loud rapping at his gate, on which, unknown to himself, so many golden advantages depended, disturbed him, he answered from his window, and on being told a chaise waited to carry him to a lady in want of his assistance, he made all possible haste, and having

having taken every usual precaution to fence out the cold, hobbled through wind and rain to the chaise, into which he was no sooner entered, than a hood was thrown over his head by a person whose manual strength rendered all opposition vain.

The doctor's courage oozed out at all points, and he implored mercy in an accent that proved his terror.

"Be patient, Sir," said the person who held both the doctor and the hood, in a passive position, "no injury is intended you; you are really going to a lady, who may or may not want you;—you are the agent, but not the confident, of a secret that may make your fortune; you will have time to consider of a proposal I am authorized to make: the child, who will soon be brought into the world, must never know the authors of its being:—Do you comprehend?"

"He—he—hem!—no, no, not quite—he—he—hem—clear!—he—he—hem."

"A bank note of 500l. will be put into the hands of the person who relieves them

of all anxiety on its account;—do you comprehend now?"

"Hem—hem! I—I think—I presume I do!"

"Very well, Sir;—if the child live a twelvemonth, five hundred guineas more will be remitted.—You are sure you understand."

"Oh perfectly; but if I had known this before, to engage a nurse—"

"Be satisfied, Sir; the person who employs you, knew better than to trust any thing to the taciturnity of a country doctor, or to the gossip of a nurse: and, Sir, be assured there will be observers on your conduct; your secrecy and prudence will find its reward; but should you be disposed to babble, or make discoveries, the former will be to your loss, the latter productive only of disappointment."

The doctor was silent; he was already reaping a golden harvest from the night's adventure—Five hundred pounds! and at the end of the year as much more! Oh for a nurse, from whom a child so endowed might suck longevity!

The chaise rolled on as the first 500 was laying out to the best advantage ; and besides the desirables it would purchase, he would, no doubt, obtain some great friends by the transaction, whom if he once could discover them, which notwithstanding the injunctions to the contrary, he resolved at least to attempt, must purchase his silence. Lost in these agreeable reveries, he forgot to note the time which passed before the carriage stopped, though that was so material a point in the discovery he projected.

The first entrance into the house, a little damped his idea of the consequence of his employers ; he could perceive, notwithstanding the hood, it was small ; the stair-case by no means calculated for the accommodation of a grand family ; and the room into which he was led, when permitted to see, was furnished in so plain and undistinguished a manner, it was as impossible for him to note a single article, as it was unlikely people of any distinction inhabited it.

The groans from an inner room directed his attention thither ; they became more loud and

and frequent. The masked person who accompanied him from Penry, remained with him, trembling and walking about in the utmost agitation; several times he turned from the doctor to unmask and wipe the perspiration from his face.

"I am certain," said the doctor, who really was skilful in that branch of the profession, "the lady wants my assistance;" and in that instant, Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin entered to require it.

The masked person, alarmed beyond measure, burst into tears:—"Save! Oh save my child!" said he, putting a purse into the Doctor's hand, as he was hastily following the female into the inner apartment.

After two hours torturing suspense, on the part of the mask, and dangerous agony on that of the lady, Mrs. M'Laurin entered the room with a fine female infant, which, according to the order before given her, she prepared to dress.

The mask refused even to look at it:—"Should I," said he, "meet in its countenance a lineament resembling the serpent her

father, how shall I restrain my rage? how conquer the desire to dash it to atoms;—and should she look like her mother, shall I not gaze on her till I forget what I have lost?—Never, never will I behold the offspring of the smiling villain, whose hypocrisy dealt destruction to me and mine."

" Ah, pure bairn!" said Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin, " gude trothe an thou wert mine ain, my herte cude nae be mair fair."

" Silence!" said the duke, sternly, " thy Scotch tongue must not be heard."

" Trothe, my gude lorde," cried the honest woman, " I may haud my tongue, but an I were to dee, I caunna helpe greeting;—Oh 'tis a bonny cheel!"

During the many hours Lady Elinor had passed with this good creature, she had often repeated her unhappy story, and deplored the fatal consequence of her union with her lover. As Mrs. M'Laurin knew how every inch of the Athelane estates were settled at the duke's death; and as she believed in the validity of Elinor's marriage, and the legitimacy of her child, she had began to feel herself both surprised

prized and uneasy, when, as the time of child-birth drew near, she was kept in entire ignorance of the fate destined for the infant: her orders were, to dress it the instant it was born, in such plain things as were provided, and to have ready such wrappers as would fence it from the cold air.

“ Weel, weel !” thought Moggy M'Laurin, “ I sal do as hes grace oreders; but I sal sete my merke opon the bairn, that I may awaie ken the cheel of the hoose of Athelane :”—And accordingly, Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin being mistress of the art of marking letters with gunpowder, and valuing herself on having been employed by the late duchess to work the coronet on the houshold linnen, she made the two initials of the father and mother's surname, A. and B. on the child's left side under a coronet, while the duke paced the apartment in the utmost disorder, and while the doctor, quite as well disposed to note the event, contrived, during the few minutes he remained in the room after Mrs. M'Laurin, to cut a square piece out

of an India chintz counterpane, which lay on the bed, and hide it in his bosom.

On his return to the mask, he received from him a bank note of fifty pounds, in addition to one hundred guineas in the purse; the doctor bowed to the ground; the mask then beckoned Mrs. Moggy, who held the child wrapped, according to order, in swanskin, to *fence it from cold*: he received it from her, and with another bank note for five hundred pounds, gave it into the hands of the still bowing doctor; and then, having again put on the hood, led him carefully to the chaise, which set off full speed.

The doctor had now, from mere impatience to dispose of his riches, lost all possible inclination to mark the length of the way; but his desire, and his power to arrive at the end of his journey, were two distinct things; for, after driving near two hours, he was guided by the mask into another chaise, which seemed to cut the air during another hour, when it stopped.

“ You are now, doctor,” said the mask, “ entering London.”

“ London !

“ London ! good God ! he—hem ! London ! what can I do—he—hem ! with this infant in London ! he—he—hehem !”

“ The world, doctor,” replied the mask, gravely, “ is a country never to be known by description ; I have travelled through it, and have always found all sorts of accommodations are to be had for money : you have a tolerable sum now in your pocket ; you are not to suppose that the persons from whom you received it, had your convenience only in view, though this is perhaps the hardest duty they will impose, while you may with certainty, reckon on advantages from them in proportion to your care of the infant, which is now your own.”

He ceased ;—the chaise went on, and the string being loose, the hood presently dropped off,—when the doctor found himself, his charge, and six hundred and fifty pounds, in notes and cash, rattling over the stones in the Borough without his masked companion.

The chaise driver asked, where his honour would please to alight ?

His honour did not know ; he had never before entered the metropolis in such style ; so the lad, taking his own directions, drove to the Cross-Keys, Gracechurch-street, where a stage was that moment drawn out, which by the information on the pannel, he saw passed the house of his brother the farmer ; and it immediately struck him, that as Mrs. T. Croak was one of the best tempered and best dispositioned women in the world, and as, although she could not at certain times, help feeling a large portion of contempt for her proud brother-in-law, yet there were also times when she was brow-beat into an appearance of respect for him, she was the woman in the world most proper to take all the trouble of the infant off his hands at an easy rate, while he laid out the profits of his bargain to the *best advantage*.

He therefore stepped out of the chaise into the coach, and, before he could lay the swan-skin wrapper with the child on the seat, to get at money to pay the fare, both chaise and lad were out of sight. As the surprize of this incident was accompanied by the return of

of a guinea to ninety-nine shining fellows, it did not discompose the doctor, who, with his charge, whom warmth and motion had effectually lulled, was set down at his brother's farm, in the same instant that a neighbouring mechanic, whose wife was in labour and thought to be in danger, was imploring assistance from the farmer-doctor, which he was always ready to give to his poor neighbours gratis.

The farmer was not at home; and as Dr. Croak had a point to carry with his sister-in-law, after prevailing on her to take care of the infant till she could provide a nurse, he very readily complied with her request, and followed the poor man to his wife, whom he safely delivered of a female child, as he had truly related to Colonel Buhanun, with whom also, as he had *not* related to the Colonel, or any other person but those immediately concerned in the transaction, he also left his charge to be nursed, at sixteen shillings per month.

Mrs. T. Croak's conclusion, at the sight of the infant, was, that her brother-in-law

had made a faux pas which, it was natural to suppose, he wished to conceal from Madam Bawsky ; but whether right in her conjecture or not, an innocent child was to her an innocent child, belong to whom it would ; finding a slip of paper under its cap, with “Elinor” wrote on it, she had it baptized, on the Sunday following, by that name ; and it was to her care the doctor attributed the child’s healthy look when, three months after, he ordered the nurse to bring it to the milk-house in Hyde-Park, at a given hour, in consequence of a billet he received from the mask.

Mrs. Bawsky thought proper, on this occasion, to send a fine robe and cap, laced with Valenciennes’ edging, for the appearance of the child ; and the doctor, not a little proud of its healthy countenance, attended himself to the place appointed, where Mrs. Moggy M’Laurin was in waiting for them.

The good woman, who was now returning to Scotland, as the duke and his family were on the point of leaving Britain, both himself

himself and Lady Elinor being in ill health, with great difficulty, had prevailed on his grace to allow her to see the infant before her departure; when the duke found her importunities unceasing, he wrote to the doctor, not chusing to entrust the place of residence, even to his female confident.

Mr. Moggy M'Laurin wept over the infant, and took especial care to note the mark on her side.

“ I assure you madam,” said the nurse, “ ‘tis not dirt; I am sure I have washed her with soap and water as long as washing is good, and it won’t stir:—my husband says as she will be a great schollard, for she is born with A B C on her.”

“ Borne! nae, nae, my gude weef, trothe it was a merke of my ain, with a leetle gun-pooder. Ah my precious bairn, hoo leeken her paupau she looks! my bonny cheeld! wha kens but the gude Gode may bring abooten his providence, sae thaut aw thy mither’s mickle filler may come tull thee.”

The nurse was a north country woman, but had she not understood the Scotch phra-

ses, a purse of ten guineas, which, unseen by the doctor, Mrs. M'Laurin was ordered to put into her hands, were an explanation very much to the advantage of her nursery.

She returned home without revealing her good fortune, confident that she had the honour to suckle the child of some very great personage; and in consequence, immediately rose in her demands for nursing, from sixteen shillings to one guinea a month, and also for dozens of all sorts; which now, as three parts of the year were expired, as the doctor expected the second five hundred, and as he could not be certain how soon he might be called upon for another exhibition of the child, he thought proper to grant, as well as permission for the nurse to take her charge with her twenty miles further from London, where it suited her husband's business to remove,—and where she continued, at the same stipend, with now and then, what Mrs. Bawsky chose to think extravagant demands for clothing, three years, when the doctor received a letter by post, of which the following is a copy.

SIR,

SIR,

“ Your child, for such she is now considered, is a gentlewoman, and you will be enabled to provide for her as such;—you receive inclosed a draft on Messrs. Adderly and Co. for one thousand pounds, which you are to understand is to be appropriated to the education of your daughter;—a fund for her future provision will be vested in your hands at a proper time.

MASK.”

The draft was signed by a respectable merchant, and paid as soon as presented; on which Mrs. Bawsky thought proper to hire an additional female domestic, and having given the nurse notice of her intention, fetched home her charge.

Independent of being the doctor’s pet, Elinor was a fine little creature, and the fondness of her adopted uncle and aunt increased out of all bounds, after she attained her sixth year; when a person, whose air and manner bespoke his high rank and quality, stopped at the doctor’s door, and paid into his hands, six thousand pounds for the use of

his daughter, without requesting to see, or even enquiring whether she were living or dead. Mrs. M'Laurin had indeed a second interview with her, at the same place, and satisfied herself in respect to her marks, a few months before this desirable event happened.

The Duke carried Lady Elinor with him to Italy, where, though he endeavoured in vain to get rid of the corroding anguish of his own deep regret, he was so happy as to re-establish the health of his daughter, whom he had persuaded, her child died in a few minutes after its birth ; a statement she was incapable of contradicting, as her delivery was followed by a milk fever, from which she recovered, against the judgment of the faculty.

Change of air, youth, exercise, and the resources of her own firm mind, did that for Lady Elinor, which no effort of nature or art could do for her father ; every hour of his existence endeared the memory of the blessing he had lost ; his heart, he would say, was broken :—his decay was slow but sure ; and, having

having permitted his daughter to decline the addresses of several noblemen, who were captivated by her beauty, he at length reminded her of her oath of obedience, and entreated she would let him see her married, before he joined his sainted wife and son.

Lady Elinor's was a truly widowed heart ; she calmly avowed the fire of love was extinct in her bosom. The duke frowned, she trembled ; he apostrophized his duchess, she wept ; he sighed the name of Malcolm, and she was vanquished.

They were then at Florence ; an accident, which will be related in a future chapter, made them acquainted with Lord Valler-ton, who was then at the court of Florence in a public character ; and there the marriage took place, which fixed the home of the beautiful Elinor far from the native castle, from the woods and well-remembered caverns of Athelane.

Lord Cheltenham had religiously kept his word : Lady Almeria herself was never acquainted with the particulars of a tragedy, her brother never forgave himself for occasioning ;

tioning; but what the duke could not conceal from himself, he thought it right to reveal to Lord Denningcourt, and that with the unreserved consent of Lady Elinor, who, considering herself as the widow of her first and only love, felt no shame in confessing to her future husband, she had been a mother.

Lord Denningcourt was too passionately attached to her to have given her up, had the circumstance been less favourable; but confident the woman he thought most beautiful, could not fail to be the most virtuous, he declined hearing particulars, taking it on Lady Elinor's word, she was a widow; and she became his wife in the entire ignorance of the existence of her daughter.

Two of the last collected acts of Duke Athelane, were to send Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin to England, to certify the existence of his grand daughter, and to put into the hands of Lord James Athelane fix thousand pounds, with directions to pay it to Doctor Croak, for the benefit of his daughter; not, as he said,

said, chusing to make this provision in his will.

Lord James, now Duke of Athelane, had some vague suspicion, that the provision was meant for the offspring of some early gallantry, which his brother, though conscious of it himself, had reasons for concealing from the world, and therefore paid the money without expressing, or indeed feeling, any curiosity about the person who was to enjoy it.

Lord Denningcourt, who was a man of the world, and always held an appointment, either at court, or in some department of government, had, in consequence of the former, occasional business to transact with Lord Gauntlet, and of course was on visiting habits with him ; but the ladies were not acquainted, though they often met in the circle, and were near neighbours in the country.

It was by mere accident the two noblemen met at Sir Solomon Mushroom's door, on the morning when Major Buanun was making enquiries relative to his nephew's effects.

Lord

Lord Denningcourt related the accident to his lady at court, where he met her. Her ladyship was taken ill soon after, and fainting in the circle, was obliged to be carried home.

She continued confined to her bed three weeks; but at the end of that period, torn with anguish and suspense, she formed the desperate resolution of seeing Major Buanun.

Having informed herself, from Sir Solomon Mushroom, of his lodging, she repaired thither, and from thence, on the information of the people, to the inn, where, in the affecting interview which made so strong an impression on Elinor, she learned, that according to her own estimation, she had lived with her lord an innocent adulteress: Wallace Buanun, the dear unfortunate husband of her heart, having been relieved by a strong antidote, from the effects of the poison he had, in desperation, swallowed, was only lately relieved from life's "fitful fever." The major, who knew the late duke, as well as many other of his kindred and countrymen, had been informed of his nephew's existence, was astonished to find the person most concerned ignorant

rant of his fate ; he endeavoured to reconcile her to what could not now be remedied, or recalled ; but though he succeeded in convincing her, that to keep the anguish which almost distracted her, from disturbing the repose of her lord, was a duty she owed both to him and herself, she parted from him in a state of the most pitiable dejection ; and the disorder of her mind had soon so dangerous an effect on her health, that, added to the mortification his son's conduct inflicted, induced his lordship to give up all his appointments, and retire to Denningcourt castle.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin was still an hearty old dame. The duke never trusted her with the place, or manner in which he had disposed of his grand-child ; and to risk Lady Denningcourt's peace, during the life of her husband, without having it in her power, at least, to put her in the way of discovering her child, would answer no good purpose ; but the news no sooner reached her, that the earl was dead, then down went her spinning-wheel, and away tramped Moggy twelve Scotch miles to Athelane castle, where she found

found the duke preparing to go south, on a visit to the noble widow.

On comparing Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin's information with the private provision made for the daughter of a person so near the place of Lady Elinor's *accouchement*, the duke could not doubt that Doctor Croak was in the possession of the secret clue to so interesting a mystery, and therefore took Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin with him to Denningcourt.

Lady Denningcourt's mind was made up : her relations were all rich ; Mr. and Miss Angus her cousins, were heirs to her uncle, and the family estates, she determined, should remain in it ; but to the thousands and tens of thousands in her own immediate gift, the poor, if Lord Denningcourt did not reform, she resolved, should be her heirs.

The duke came south, expressly to fetch her to Athelane, while every thing was completed at her own house : London was a place to which she never intended to return, and she had bid the gay world adieu.

But what a revolution did the intelligence now brought her occasion :—A child ! Oh God !

God ! had she a child !—did she yet possess an object on which to lavish the fund of tenderness, which the recent news of her Wallace revived in her bosom ; a child ! in whose dear face she might trace the never, never forgotten graces that won her young heart ! what ! a daughter ! a friend ! a companion ! to love, to cherish, to be proud of—to whom she might transfer that inexhaustible fondness which now assisted her too faithful recollection, in re-tracing the air, the manner, the look, the honour of her dear injured Wallace ! Oh why wait till to-morrow—why not set out that instant, that very instant ?—Alas ! many wretched years had she groaned in anguish, hiding her sorrows from the eyes and ears of the unpitying world ; and could she be happy too soon ? could a mother begin to atone to her child for the injurious deprivation of maternal love too soon ?

The duke was little less impatient : “ ah, my dear neice,” said he, “ your child must be amiable, she shall, she must be duchess of Athelane !” Lady Denningcourt wept ; “ heaven grant

grant her heart be not already touched, if it is, ah how miserable will it make us."

Poor Lady Denningcourt! "Years," said she, "I have groaned in anguish;" yet in the same instant, how easy did she fall into the enthusiastic error, from which she had herself suffered so much;—she already anticipated the misfortune of her daughters having formed an attachment beneath her high blood, but all her feeling and experience did not suggest an idea of sacrificing pride to happiness, no such expedient occurred to the mother or uncle, no—nor to Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin.

During the long journey, nothing was talked of, but first, the resemblance the good woman protested the child bore to her father, and which her ladyship predetermined to doat upon; then the match the duke planned, which, by uniting the grand-daughter of his brother with the son of his sister, would also unite the family honours and wealth; a metere, Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin protested, of muckle importance tull all Scotland.

Arrived in London, they held a council how to proceed. "Left the dear creature should be

be overpowered with the excess of her joy," said Lady Denningcourt, " my uncle had better receive us here ; Mrs. M'Laurin and myself will go to this doctor, and claim my child."

" Ah gude trothe, my lady, wull we ; and noo ye sal ken another gude token ;" and she took from her trunk the counterpane, out of which the doctor had cut a piece, which Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin discovered immediately after he was gone, but which, in consequence of her presentiment, the child would one day be acknowledged, she had concealed.

With this important tie on the doctor's veracity, Lady Denningcourt and Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin set off for Penry, where, having demanded a private audience, the poor doctor foreboded the setting of his splendid sun, in the account he must give of money he had as lavishly parted with, as unexpectedly received ; he dared not deny the fact : Elinor was summoned ; the mark found, and washed with the tears of the fond mother.

Elinor was not, however, overpowered with joy ; her young heart was, indeed, not only

only touched—it was lost—gone past recovery.

Mrs. Moggy M'Laurin was a true Scots woman; nothing she better remembered than money transactions; the doctor, besides other sums which, as every body knew the late duke's generosity, he had undoubtedly received, had also been entrusted with six thousand pounds in one sum, for the use of his ward, which reminded by her, Lady Denningcourt merely mentioned, to prove whether he had been a faithful guardian; and when she found by his hesitating and stammering, that he had made use of the little fortune which might have been her child's all, she expressed the strongest resentment, and indignantly commanded him to prepare to make restitution.

This, however, she would not have persisted in demanding, had not a discovery of her daughter's attachment enraged the duke, who insisted that the doctor had schemed his son's advancement, by throwing him in the way of his ward, though he must know she was of superior rank and connection.

Lady

Lady Denningcourt's heart melted in tenderness over her daughter ; that daughter, on the contrary had recollections inimical to respect :—she had set it down as a decided fact, that the lady who visited Major Buhanun, intrigued with him : Mrs. Bawsky had declared the thing was absolutely certain, and she had yet no reason to doubt her sagacity in facts of that sort :—then there were three people in the world she tenderly loved ; Rosa, young Croak, and Mrs. Harley ; from all these she was going to be torn :—with the former, as living with the person to whom her mother was criminally attached, she could not correspond—and how could she see the two last ? then again, she was used to the nominal uncle and aunt,—and with how many wiser people than Elinor does habit pass for affection.

It was in vain the gentle, affable Lady Denningcourt wished to gain the confidence of her daughter ; in vain she took her, in the most elegant style, first to Bath, then to Denningcourt ; she carried with her all her first unalterable predilections ; she felt abashed

in company,—miserable alone,—lost her colour, her appetite, and her spirits.

The reserve she promised Rosa in her letter to impose on herself, in regard to young Croak, lasted just as long as he found it impossible to speak to her, and vanished the first time he watched her walking at a distance from the house ; one interview succeeded another ; no letter arrived from Rosa to assist her struggles against love and young Croak : her mother's fondness was reproach ; her virtuous advice hypocrisy ; the polite habits she recommended tasks ; and at length, when the duke, to whom she never spoke without trembling, nor ever looked at without confusion, talked of making her a duchess, presenting her to the king and queen, and a thousand things to the same effect, wishing to excite her emulation, she fairly told Jack of all the dreadful things that were to happen, and as she had more money than she thought they could want during their whole lives, readily acceded to his proposal, of going off to Gretna-Green to be married, and escape being a Duchess.

They were stopped, as Betty said ; and then the thoughts of being carried back to

be

be made a duchess ; to be shewn to the king and queen ; to live with lords and ladies ; to be decked with diamonds ; to fare sumptuously every day ; together with the sight of poor Jack first hanging to the wheels of the duke's carriage, then rolling in the road, tearing his hair, and biting the dust, was too much for her little reason,—it tottered on its throne, and to the unspeakable grief of Lady Denningcourt and her friends, was by degrees totally overthrown. She had been carried to Doctor W. and was now attended by a gentleman of the faculty recommended by him.

Meanwhile, young Croak having been sent home to his father, with denunciation of vengeance from the duke, if ever he was seen or heard of again at Denningcourt, old Croak could hit on no other way of keeping himself out of prison, but putting his son there ; he therefore conscientiously arrested him for certain sums said to be advanced, of which the poor youth had never seen a farthing, and allowed him half a guinea a week to subsist on in the Marshalsea prison.